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THE PRINCE

BY

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI

LONDON
PHILIP ALLAN & CO.
QUALITY COURT

First edition, 1925

Made and Printed in Great Britain by
The Camelot Press Limited
Southampton

FOREWORD

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI was born at Florence in 1469. He was the second son of Bernardo Machiavelli, and descended from the ancient marquesses of Tuscany. Having received a liberal education he became a clerk, in 1494, in the office of one of the chief officials in the Florentine court of chancery, and four years later was nominated secretary to the Council of Ten, a committee entrusted with the management of foreign affairs. This situation he held for fourteen years, when the return of the Medicis to Florence overthrew the government he served. His great abilities in negotiation soon brought him to the front, and from 1498 to 1512 he was constantly employed as an envoy of the Florentine republic to the various states and rulers of Italy, as well as to Germany and France. The culminating point of his reputation as a diplomatist was his mission in October 1502 to that great master of treachery and dissimulation Cesare Borgia, commonly called 'Il Valentino,' of which an account is preserved in fifty-two letters

written by Machiavelli during the course of the negotiations at Cesare's court. It has been said that these letters are "unsurpassed in dramatic interest by any series of state papers." In 1512, following the Battle of Ravenna, Florence opened its gates to the Medicis, whereupon Machiavelli was deprived of his office and disgraced. In the following year, a conspiracy against the Medicis having been discovered, he was put to the torture and imprisoned in a dungeon. His friends, however, procured his release, and Machiavelli retired to his country house about eight miles from Florence, where he occupied himself in writing *The Prince*. In a letter written at this time he describes his occupation as "snaring thrushes, cutting wood, and playing at *cricca* with a butcher, a miller, and two kiln men. But," he continues, "when evening comes I return home and shut myself up in my study. Before I enter it, I take off my rustic garb, soiled with mud and dirt, and put on a suit adapted for courts. Thus fitly habited I enter the ancient courts of the men of antiquity, where, being kindly received by them, I feed on that food which alone is mine and for which I was born. . . . For four hours I enjoy immunity from annoyance, I forget any grief, I fear neither

poverty nor death, and am entirely immersed in the doings of these great men." After some six years of rustication Machiavelli again entered public life, and was invited by Pope Leo X to prepare a plan for remodelling the government of Florence. Shortly after this (1520), Cardinal Giulio de Medici (afterwards Pope Clement VII) commissioned him to write a history of Florence, which great work occupied him for the better part of six years. Until 1527 he was employed in embassage, and when the Medicis were once more driven from Florence in May of that year, Machiavelli returned to his native city. But popular feeling was now against him, for he had served the Medicis, and disappointed by this neglect, he fell ill and died on the 22nd June 1527, in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

De Principatibus,[1] or as it is now usually called, *Il Principe*, was originally dedicated to Cardinal Giulio de Medici, and was not intended for publication. It was first printed at Rome, after Machiavelli's death, in 1532, with the dedication prefixed to the present edition.

[1] 'Concerning Principalities.'

DEDICATION

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI, CITIZEN AND SECRETARY OF FLORENCE, TO THE MOST MAGNIFICENT LORENZO DE MEDICI.

THOSE who court the favour of princes generally present them with whatever they possess that is most rare, curious, or valuable ; as horses, armour, embroidered cloths, precious stones, &c., according to the dignity of the personage they seek to propitiate. For my part, my anxiety to present myself to the notice of your highness, with the best proof of my devotion, has not enabled me to discover amongst all I possess anything that I esteem more or account so valuable as a knowledge of the actions of celebrated men ; a knowledge acquired by a long experience of modern times and a diligent perusal of the ancients. The observations which I have made with all the accuracy, reflection, and care of which I am capable, are contained in the small volume now addressed to you. And although I have not the vanity

to deem it worthy of your acceptance, yet I am persuaded that your goodness will not refuse the offering, since it is impossible to present you with anything more valuable than a work which will place before you, in a small compass, all the experience I have acquired during many years of continual meditation and suffering in the school of adversity.

You will find in this fragment neither a glowing and lofty style, nor any of those meretricious ornaments with which authors seek to embellish their works. Its interest must depend upon the importance of the subject, the solidity of the reflections, and the truth of the facts recorded.

It will, perhaps, appear presumptuous in me, a man of humble birth, to propose rules of conduct to those who govern ; but as the painter when about to sketch a mountainous country places himself in the plain, and in order to draw the scenery of a vale ascends an eminence, even so, I conceive, that a person must be a prince to discover the nature and character of a people, and one of the people to judge properly of a prince.

I am therefore bold enough to hope that you will accept this feeble tribute in reference

to the intention with which it is offered; and if you condescend to read it with attention you will have evidence of my ardent desire to see you fill with glory those high destinies to which fortune and your splendid talents have called you.

If from your elevated position you should condescend to look down on a person in my lowly station, you will see how long and how unworthily I have been persecuted by the extreme and unrelenting malevolence of fortune.

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI.

THE PRINCE

CHAPTER I

Of the different kinds of principalities, and the means by which they are acquired.

All states and governments which have ever possessed, or at the present day exercise, dominion over mankind have been in their origin, or continue to subsist, either as republics or principalities. Principalities are either hereditary in the family by whose descendants they have long been ruled, or they are, on the other hand, but newly acquired. The latter are either wholly and absolutely new, as the government of Milan was to Francisco Sforza, or else they become annexed as appendages to the hereditary states of the prince by whom they are acquired, as the territory of Naples now is to the kingdom of Spain. States so acquired either become subject to the dominion of a prince, or they enjoy their liberty. The conqueror subdues them either by his own

prowess or through the intervention of foreign arms, from some fortunate event, or by means of his own personal courage and talents.

CHAPTER II

Of hereditary principalities.

I SHALL not here speak of republican governments, having already discussed that subject amply in my Essay on Livy. I shall confine myself solely to the subject of principalities; and in following the divisions which I have already laid down I shall consider how such states ought to be governed and maintained.

I must first premise that hereditary states, accustomed to be governed by a line of princes, are more easily maintained than such as are new. In fact it is only necessary for an hereditary prince to conform strictly with the measures established by his predecessors and comply with the exigencies which particular occasions may require. Thus by the rational exercise of ordinary faculties he may always maintain himself with credit in his states, or at least he can only be dispossessed by some force far greater than his own; and even then he

may re-establish himself with ease on the first check which the fortune of his adversary may sustain. Of this Italy affords us an example in the duke of Ferrara, who was enabled to resist the Venetians in 1484, and Pope Julius II. in 1510, merely by having been so long established in the duchy. For the natural prince having no motive or necessity for irritating his subjects, it follows of course that he will be more beloved by them than another; hence if some extraordinary vices do not render him odious it is natural that he should engross their inclination and regard. In the antiquity and long duration of a government both the cause and the remembrance of innovation become confounded, for one change ever produces an increasing inclination for another.

CHAPTER III

Of mixed principalities.

In the government of principalities newly acquired many difficulties occur; for in the the first place, if they are not entirely new but merely annexed as appendages to another sovereignty (in which case the state may be called a mixed one), a degree of instability is created by the difficulties ever incident to new principalities. For as most men are willing enough to change their masters in expectation of improving their condition, such a persuasion induces them to take up arms against the existing government. But in this respect they are often deceived and find by experience that they have only rendered their condition worse. This mischievous result seems to be both natural and inevitable; for every new prince is compelled in some degree to displease his new subjects, either by the presence of the soldiers he is obliged to retain or by numerous other grievances which are always attendant

on recent acquisitions. And thus he is sure to render all those persons inimical to him whom he has injured by seizing the principality, and is unable to preserve the friendship of others who assisted him in his enterprise, because he can neither reward them as they expect nor coerce them with rigour, as they have laid him under such weighty obligations. For however great the military resources of a prince may be, he will find that to obtain firm footing in a province he must engage the favour and interest of the inhabitants. From these circumstances it happened that Louis XII. king of France so quickly gained possession of Milan, and as speedily lost it. The troops of Lodovico Sforza were sufficient to retake it at the first attack. For the very people who had opened the gates of the city to the French, deceived in the hopes they had conceived of future favours, soon became disgusted with the conduct of their new master.

It is doubtless true that when a prince has reconquered a country which has once rebelled he can retain it afterwards more easily in subjection. He avails himself of the rebellion as a reason for using less reserve in securing his conquest by punishing the guilty, watching the suspected, and

strengthening himself in all the vulnerable points of his province. Thus when the French were first driven from the duchy of Milan this was effected by a mere movement on the confines on the part of Lodovico Sforza ; but on the second occasion it became necessary to form a league with other states against the French, to destroy their armies and expel them from Italy ; and all this was owing to the causes before assigned. The duchy of Milan was nevertheless twice wrested from its new master. We have mentioned the general reasons which occasioned his losing it the first time ; it remains for us to examine the causes of the second and to speak of the measures which the King of France, or any other prince in a similar situation, ought to have adopted in order to maintain his ground better than Louis did.

We must first premise that a state which a sovereign acquires and unites with his ancient territories is either contiguous to the latter, and they both speak the same language, or they differ in these respects. In the former case nothing is easier than to maintain possession especially if the inhabitants have not been accustomed to liberty. Little more is required than to

extirpate the family of the prince who last ruled over them, and by maintaining their ancient customs and manners, provided there exist no national antipathy between the old and new states, the latter will live peaceably under their new prince, as we have seen in the instances of Burgundy, Brittany, Gascony, and Normandy, countries which have been so long united to France ; for although doubtless some difference in language existed there, yet their habits and their manners were congenial and they were therefore capable of being easily blended.

Hence in order to preserve a newly acquired state, particular attention should be paid to two points. In the first place care must be taken to extinguish entirely the family of the ancient sovereign ; and in the next, the laws should not be altered nor the taxes increased ; by which means in a little time the new states will become consolidated with the other dominions of the prince.

But when a prince acquires the sovereignty of a country differing from his own both in language, manners, and intellectual organisation, great difficulties arise ; and in order to maintain the possession of it good fortune must unite with superior talent.

One of the readiest and most effective

methods which a new prince can employ is to go thither and inhabit the country himself, which cannot fail to render his possession more durable and secure. This was the conduct of the Turk in respect to Greece ; for notwithstanding every precaution which human foresight could suggest, he could never have succeeded in retaining that country under his dominion if he had not fixed his residence there. For when the prince is immediately present he sees the commencement of disorder and can apply a speedy remedy ; but when he is absent he only learns the evil when it has attained such force and extent as to become incurable. Besides, his new provinces are not liable to be pillaged by deputies and other officers : the new subjects enjoy the consoling advantage of free and speedy access to the prince ; they have more reason to love him if they are well disposed, or to fear him if they are disaffected. Foreign princes would also be deterred from attacking such a state from the imminent difficulty which always attends the attempt to dispossess a sovereign of a country in which he personally resides.

Another excellent method is to send colonies to those places which are considered

as the keys of the province. This measure must either be adopted or a military force maintained. Colonies cost the prince but little and they are in their consequences injurious only to those who deserve punishment, or to the enemies of the prince who have been dispossessed of their lands and houses for the assistance and accommodation of the new colonists; and as they are ever inferior in number, and moreover dispersed and impoverished, they are thus rendered inoffensive. On the other hand, all those who have suffered no wrong nor injury are inclined for repose and quiet, terrified by the fate of those who have been already despoiled. Hence I conclude that colonies are inexpensive, are faithful to the prince, and injurious only to a small number of individuals, who being, as I have said before, reduced to beggary and dispersed, are incapable of disturbing the tranquillity of the state; for we must never lose sight of this maxim, "Either make a man your friend, or put it out of his power to be your enemy." He may revenge a slight injury, but a great one deprives him of his power to avenge. Hence the injury should be of such magnitude that the prince shall have nothing to dread from his vengeance.

But if instead of forming colonies armed forces are sent thither, the expense will be infinitely greater and the whole revenue of the country consumed in the single purpose of maintaining peaceable possession, so that the prince loses rather than gains by his conquest. The wrongs effected in this manner are so much the greater as they extend indiscriminately to all his subjects, who are perpetually harassed by the marches, the lodging, and subsistence of his troops. These inconveniences being universally felt, all become his enemies, and the more dangerous on this account, that although defeated, they remain in possession of their homes. Such a force, therefore, will be in every respect as prejudicial as colonies are advantageous.

The new sovereign of a country, the manners and constitution of which are different from his own, ought to take care and make himself the protector and chief of the weaker neighbouring princes and to curb and lessen the authority of the more powerful. He ought especially, in every possible case, to prevent the interference of a stranger as powerful as himself; for it frequently happens that the discontented party calls in somebody from motives of

ambition or fear. Thus the Etolians invited the Romans into Greece; and in every province where they gained admittance it was always by the favour and co-operation of the natives. The reason is obvious: whenever a powerful party gets footing in a country, all the malcontents and inferior party immediately join him, actuated by envy of those who were more powerful than themselves: so that it costs him but little pains to win over those minor personages, and when they are gained they very soon adopt the measures which he prescribes. But he must take especial care that they do not grow too strong and powerful, and then, by his own forces and with their assistance, he may easily weaken and destroy the authority of others and thus make himself sole arbiter of the country. He who does not carefully attend to this point will soon lose all that he has acquired and experience nothing but troubles, difficulties, and embarrassments in his new acquisition.

The Romans in the provinces which they conquered carefully practised this system; they planted colonies; they protected the lesser neighbouring powers without increasing their strength; they humbled the over-grown power of others, and never permitted any

foreigner whom they had reason to fear to obtain the smallest influence in them. In illustration of this I need but refer to the provinces of Greece. By them the Achaians and Etolians were supported, the power of the Macedonians was weakened, and Antiochus was driven from his dominions; yet all the services of the Achaians and Etolians could not obtain for them the smallest increase of their possessions; notwithstanding all the persuasions of Philip the Romans never would receive him as a friend till they had lowered his power; and they too much dreaded Antiochus to permit him to preserve the smallest degree of sovereignty in that province.

The Romans on this occasion did what ought to be done by every wise prince whose duty it is not only to provide a remedy for present evils but at the same time to anticipate such as are likely to happen: by foreseeing them at a distance they are easily remedied; but if we wait till they have surrounded us, the time is past, and the malady is become incurable. It happens then as it does to physicians in the cure of a consumption which in the commencement is easy to cure and difficult to understand; but when it has neither been discovered in

due time nor treated upon a proper principle it becomes easy to understand and difficult to cure. The same thing happens in state affairs by foreseeing them at a distance, which is only done by men of talents: the evils which might arise from them are soon cured; but when from want of foresight they are suffered to increase to such a height that they are perceptible to every one, there is no longer any remedy.

The Romans, therefore, when aware of evils that might happen, immediately prepared to avert them, and never suffered them to grow worse merely to evade a war, well knowing that the war was not to be escaped by such means, and that in deferring it they always gave a great advantage to the enemy. Upon which account they rather chose to make war both against Philip and Antiochus in Greece than suffer those princes to invade Italy. They might then, unquestionably, have avoided the war in both cases; but they judged better, and they did not think fit to put in practice the maxim of politicians of the present day, *viz.*, to wait the advantage of time. They made use only of their prudence and their courage; knowing that time drives everything

before it and may bring good as well as evil, and evil as well as good.

But let us return to France and examine to what extent she has followed the principles we have just explained. I will not speak of Charles VIII. but rather of Louis XII., a prince the length of whose government in Italy has enabled us more easily to understand his course ; and you will see that he proceeded in a manner entirely contrary to what a prince ought to do who would keep possession of a kingdom so different in most respects from his own.

Louis was called into Italy by the ambition of the Venetians, who desired his assistance to enable them to conquer part of Lombardy. I do not blame this enterprise of the king or the course he first pursued. Wishing to gain a footing in Italy, and having no friends in the country, the misconduct of his predecessor Charles having closed every avenue against him, he was compelled to avail himself of that alliance, and his enterprise would have succeeded if he had not committed errors in his subsequent conduct. This monarch soon recovered Lombardy and with it the reputation that Charles had lost. The Genoese

submitted to him, the Florentines, the marquis of Mantua, the duke de Ferrara, the Bentivoglis,[1] the countess de Forli, the lords of Faenza, Pesaro, Rimini, Camerino, Piombino ; those of Lucca, Pisa, Sienna, all paid their court to him and made him offers of their friendship and assistance. The Venetians soon perceived the imprudent temerity with which they had acted, for in order to gain two towns in Lombardy, they had made the King of France master of two-thirds of Italy.

With what facility might this monarch, by observing the rules above prescribed, have maintained his power in Italy and preserved and protected all his friends! These, too numerous to be powerful, dreaded the church and the Venetians ; and compelled by their interests to remain firm to him he might by their aid effectually strengthen himself against every power that was dangerous to him. But he no sooner reached Milan than he pursued a course directly the reverse. He assisted Pope Alexander to conquer Romagna, not perceiving that by this course he weakened himself and disgusted those friends who had thrown themselves into his arms, whilst he aggrandised

[1] Lords of Bologna.

the church by adding so much more temporal dominion to the spiritual power which had already grown so formidable. This first fault committed, he was constrained to pursue it till, in order to set bounds to the ambition of Alexander and to prevent him from seizing on Tuscany, he was obliged to return into Italy.

Nor was he content with having thus aggrandised the church and alienated the affections of his natural allies; for being afterwards desirous of seizing on the kingdom of Naples, he had the folly to divide it with the king of Spain. And in this manner, though he alone was the sole arbiter of Italy, he admitted an associate in the direction of it; a rival to whose aid the ambitious and the discontented might always have recourse; and whilst he might have left the kingdom in security under a king who would willingly have become his tributary, he dispossessed him to establish another there who was powerful enough to drive himself away.

Nothing is so natural or so common as the thirst for conquest, and when men can satisfy it they deserve rather praise than censure. But when they are not equal to the enterprise they undertake disgrace is the inevitable

consequence. If the king of France, therefore, was powerful enough to invade the kingdom of Naples, he ought to have done it; but if he was not able, he should not have divided it; and if the partition which he made of Lombardy with the Venetians may in some measure be excused because they furnished him with the means of entering into Italy, the partition of Naples cannot be defended, because he was under no necessity of acting in a similar manner.

Louis then committed five capital errors in Italy. He increased the strength of a great power and destroyed that of the small ones; he called into the country a powerful foreigner; he did not go himself to live there; he did not send colonies thither; yet all these errors might have been remedied whilst he lived if he had not committed a sixth, in depressing the power of the Venetians. Unquestionably if he had not aggrandised the ecclesiastical state nor called the Spaniards into Italy it would have been necessary for him to humble the Venetian states; but having once taken those steps he ought never to have consented to their ruin. For whilst they continued powerful they would prevent others from making any acquisitions in Lombardy; as the Venetians

would never consent to such a step unless they themselves were to remain lords of the country. It was not the interest of the other, however, to deprive France of her conquests merely to enrich the Venetians, and they would never have had the courage to attack both.

If it be objected that King Louis ceded Romagna to Alexander VI. and the kingdom of Naples to the Spaniards to avoid a war, I say again we should never submit to an evil merely to prevent a war ; in fact we do not thereby avoid it but only defer it to our great injury. If others allege his promise to the pope to assist him in this enterprise in return for a dissolution of his marriage [1] and the gift of a cardinal's hat to the archbishop of Rouen,[2] my answer will be found in a subsequent article, where I shall speak concerning the good faith of princes and how far they are bound by their promises.

King Louis therefore lost Lombardy for

[1] With Jeanne, daughter of Louis XI., in order that he might marry Anne of Brittany. Nardi (*Le Storie della Citta di Firenze dal* 1494 *al* 1531. 4to, Lyons 1582) says that Pope Alexander VI. and King Louis XII. mutually and reciprocally took advantage of the ecclesiastical to acquire temporal power ; Alexander to procure Romagna for his son, Lewis to unite Brittany to his crown.

[2] George D'Amboise, born 1460, died 1510.

want of observing those maxims which ought to be followed by those who would keep possession of the provinces they have conquered. Nor is it much to be wondered at; on the contrary no consequence could be more natural or more likely to occur. I had a conversation on this subject with the Cardinal D'Amboise at Nantes, when Valentino (as the son of Pope Alexander was commonly called) occupied Romagna. The cardinal, observing that the Italians did not understand the art of war, I answered him that the French knew nothing of politics, otherwise they would never have suffered the church to grow so powerful. Experience has proved that the grandeur of the church and the power of the Spaniards in Italy have been entirely owing to France, and that her own ruin in that country may be attributed to the same cause. From whence we may draw this general and almost infallible conclusion, that the prince who contributes to the advancement of another power ruins his own. For this new power has been advanced either by address or force, both which means will ever be viewed with suspicion by him who has attained sovereignty through their instrumentality.

CHAPTER IV

Why the kingdom of Darius, conquered by Alexander, remained with his successors after his death.

In considering the difficulties which occur in preserving a state newly conquered, it may seem surprising that Alexander the Great, having in a few years made himself master of Asia and dying before he had time to take possession of it, the whole country did not revolt. And yet his successors maintained themselves there for a considerable time without experiencing any other difficulty than what arose among them from their own ambition.

To which I answer that all monarchies of which there are any records left in history have either been governed by an absolute prince, to whom all the rest are slaves and who, as ministers with his favour and consent, assist in governing the kingdom; or else by a prince and nobles who claim a share in the government, not so much through

the prince's favour as from the antiquity and nobility of their blood. Such nobles also possess states and subjects of their own, who acknowledge them as their lords and entertain a particular affection towards them.

In a country governed by a prince and ministers of his own appointment the sovereign enjoys infinitely the greatest authority, because throughout the whole province no authority is acknowledged but his; and if they obey another it is only as his minister or official, for whom they have no particular affection. Turkey and France furnish at present examples of these two kinds of government. The whole Turkish monarchy is governed by a master to whom all the others are slaves. He divides his kingdom into different provinces ruled by different governors whom he changes and recalls at pleasure; but the king of France is surrounded by his ancient nobility, who, having subjects of their own by whom they are acknowledged and beloved, are entitled to certain prerogatives, of which the king cannot deprive them without danger to himself.

If we examine both these sovereignties we shall find great difficulties in the way of conquering a kingdom governed like Turkey,

but that once effected, nothing is so easy as to preserve it. It is difficult to seize on such a state, because the invader cannot be called in by the nobles of the kingdom, nor can he reckon on the assistance and rebellion of those who surrounded the prince. The reason of this can be easily conceived from what we have said above. For the officers of the state being his slaves and dependents it becomes more difficult to corrupt them ; and supposing it were possible, little assistance is to be had from them, from their inability to draw the people along with them, for the reasons before adduced. Thus whoever attacks the Turks should expect to find them united and must depend more on his own strength than on their division. But once vanquished and their armies absolutely put to rout, nothing more is to be feared except the family of the prince. That once extinct, all farther apprehension is at an end, since no one else would have interest among the people ; and as the invader could have no hopes from them before they were conquered, so he can have nothing to fear from them afterwards.

It is quite otherwise in kingdoms governed like France ; here one may easily secure an entrance by gaining over certain nobles of

of the kingdom, among whom there will always be a party discontented and fond of change. These will open him a way to the state and facilitate the conquest of it ; but in order afterwards to keep possession an infinity of difficulties must be encountered, not only from the conquered but from those who have assisted in the enterprise. Nor will it be sufficient in this case to destroy the family of the prince ; there still remain the nobles of the kingdom to take the lead of new parties ; and as these can neither be satisfied nor destroyed, the conquest will be lost on the first and frequently on the slightest occasion.

Now if we consider the nature of Darius's government, we shall find it similar to that of Turkey. Thus Alexander was obliged to attack him in the most vigorous manner, to prevent him from keeping the field. But after his decisive victory and Darius's death the kingdom remained in possession of Alexander, secured to him from the causes we have before assigned ; and if his successors had continued united they might likewise have enjoyed it in peace, since no other tumults afterwards happened there than those which they themselves excited in it.

But of kingdoms governed like France

possession cannot be easily kept. The frequent insurrections of Spain, Gaul, and Greece against the Romans were entirely owing to the number of petty princes with which these states abounded. So long as they subsisted the power of the Romans was precarious and uncertain; but these once destroyed and their former influence forgotten, the strength and continuance of the Roman dominion rendered their possession secure; these princes might afterwards quarrel amongst themselves and set up a claim to some of the provinces, according to the authority they had acquired among the natives; but when once the house of their prince was extinct, those provinces no longer acknowledged any other master than the Romans.

In paying attention to all these differences we shall not be surprised at the facility with which Alexander kept possession of Asia, and the difficulties which certain other conquerors, such as Pyrrhus, &c., had to encounter in preserving their conquests; for the difference of their success must not be attributed to the good or bad conduct of the conqueror, but to the difference of the government of the conquered countries.

CHAPTER V

How cities and principalities should be governed, which, before they were subdued, lived under their own laws.

When states which are newly conquered have been accustomed to liberty and to live under their own laws, there are three ways of maintaining them. The first is to ruin them; the second to inhabit them; the third to leave them in the enjoyment of their laws, rendering them tributary and establishing there a small council to form a government which may keep the country in peace; for this new government being created by the prince, and dependent therefore on his favour and power, will be interested in exerting itself to support him. Besides, a state accustomed to enjoy its liberty can be more easily held by establishing there a government of its citizens than by any other means.

The Lacedemonians and the Romans furnish us with examples of these different

ways of retaining a state. The first governed Athens and Thebes by founding there a government composed of a few persons; nevertheless they afterward lost them. The Romans, to make sure of Capua, Carthage, and Numantia, destroyed them and did not lose them. They were, on the contrary, desirous to hold Greece in the same manner the Spartans had done, by restoring its liberty and its laws; this mode did not, however, succeed; and they were compelled at last to destroy several cities in Greece in order to retain the country; and doubtless that was the safest way, for otherwise whoever becomes master of a free state and does not destroy it, may expect to be ruined by it himself. In all its revolts it has ever the cry of liberty for its rallying point and its refuge, as well as the remembrance of its ancient institutions, which neither length of time nor benefits can efface; do what we may, take whatever precautions we can, unless we divide and disperse the inhabitants this name of liberty will never depart from their memory or their hearts, any more than the remembrance of their ancient institutions, and they will immediately recur to it on the slightest occasion. We see what was done at Pisa after it had continued

so many years in subjection to the Florentines.

But the case is different when cities or provinces have been accustomed to live under a prince and the race of that prince is extinct; for as they are accustomed to obey and are deprived of their former prince, they will not agree in the election of a new one, and are ignorant how to govern like free states; whence they are little disposed to rebel; and thus a conqueror may, without much difficulty, gain their affections and attach them to himself.

In republics, on the contrary, the resentment of citizens is stronger and more active, the desire of vengeance more animated, and the remembrance of their ancient liberty will not permit them to enjoy a single instant of repose; so that the surest means is either to live among them or to destroy them.

CHAPTER VI

Of new states which a prince acquires by his valour and his own arms.

It ought not to appear strange if in what I am about to advance respecting new principalities, princes, and states, I confine myself to examples furnished by the greatest personages; for men generally follow the beaten paths which others have formed, and their conduct is merely imitation. Now as we cannot keep exactly the same path, nor attain the elevation of those whom we take for models, a wise man ought only to follow the paths traced by superior genius, and imitate those only who have excelled, in order that if he cannot equal he may at least in some respects resemble them; like the skilful archer who, being at too great a distance from the object of his aim and knowing accurately the power of his bow, elevates his arrow higher than the mark, only with the intent of reaching it.

I must in the first place observe that in

a principality entirely new the degree of difficulty experienced by a prince in maintaining himself there depends on his own personal qualities. That a private individual should become a prince argues a great share of fortune or talent, and the greater part of the difficulties should be surmounted by either of these qualities. Nevertheless he who relies least on fortune has the strongest hold of his acquisitions, which is easier to those who, having no dominions of their own, are obliged to reside personally on their conquests.

Of those who have become princes solely by their own courage and talents the most eminent are Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, Theseus and some others. It might seem, doubtless, that Moses ought not to be placed in this class, as he only executed the orders of Heaven ; yet he merits our admiration if it were only for having been chosen by God to communicate his will to man.

But if we examine the actions of Cyrus, and other such conquerors and founders of monarchies, they are entitled to the highest praise. We shall find that in their conduct and particular institutions they closely resembled Moses, although he was under heavenly guidance. Their lives and actions,

however, prove that they had no other fortune than opportunity, which furnished them with the means of introducing that form of government which they conceived most appropriate. Without opportunity their talents and their courage had been lost ; and without their personal qualities opportunity had been in vain.

It was consequently necessary that Moses should find the Israelites in a state of slavery and oppression amongst the Egyptians, that they should be disposed to follow him and shake off their bondage. It was fortunate that Romulus was not brought up in Alba but was exposed at his birth, otherwise he had never become king of Rome and founder of that empire. It happened luckily for Cyrus that he found the Persians discontented with the empire of the Medes, and the Medes grown effeminate by a long peace. Theseus could not have shown his courage if he had not found the Athenians dispersed. These opportunities furnished those men with the means of success, and their talents profited by an occasion which rendered their several countries for ever illustrious, and at the same time founded their prosperity on a stable basis.

It is difficult for others to raise themselves

to dominion in the same heroic manner, but when they succeed they preserve it without trouble. The difficulties they experience arise, in part, from the changes they are obliged to introduce to establish their government upon a firm foundation. Now, nothing is more difficult and dangerous to execute, and the success of which is more doubtful, than the introduction of new laws. He who introduces them renders all those his enemies who lived to their satisfaction under the former code, and is sure to find but feeble defenders in those who are to be benefited by the new system; and this supineness arises, in part, from the fear of their adversaries, to whom the ancient order of things is beneficial, and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who have no confidence in new measures except when founded on long experience; whence it follows that when the enemies to the new order of things find an opportunity of attack, they use it with zeal and enthusiasm, while the others defend it with indifference; so that the prince encounters as much danger from his defenders as he does from his enemies.

To discuss this subject fully we must carefully examine whether these innovators propose such changes of their own accord

or whether they depend on others; that is to say, whether they are under the necessity of employing persuasion or compelled to resort to force. In the first case they never succeed; but when they are independent and have the power to compel, they seldom fail: whence it happened that all the prophets who were supported by an armed force succeeded, while those who had no such power to trust to were defeated. Besides the reasons we have already adduced, it is the nature of mankind to be fickle and inconstant in their opinions. And measures should be so taken with respect to them that when they cease to believe of their own accord they may be constrained to it by force. Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, and Romulus could never have secured an observance of the constitutions they severally formed otherwise than by force of arms. This has been proved in our days by brother Girolamo Savonarola, whose designs were at once frustrated when the multitude ceased to have faith in him; for he was destitute of the means either to compel belief or to inspire confidence. Such persons experience, it is true, great obstacles and dangers at every step, which can only be surmounted by talent and courage. But when these

difficulties are once overcome and they have extinguished those who envied their greatness, they will be held in veneration and live in security, tranquillity, and happiness.

To these great and remarkable examples I will add another, less conspicuous, perhaps, but bearing some resemblance to the rest, and which will suffice for all others of a like nature. I allude to Hiero of Syracuse, who from a private individual became prince of Syracuse and was beholden to no other fortune than opportunity. In fact the people of Syracuse being oppressed chose him for their leader, and he well deserved to be their prince. His private conduct was such that all authors who speak of him allow that he wanted nothing but a kingdom to make him a monarch. He disbanded the old army and organised new troops ; he abandoned old alliances and formed new ones ; and as his friends and the army were entirely devoted to him, it was easy for him to build securely on such foundations, so that though he had much difficulty in obtaining his dignity, it required but little to preserve it.

CHAPTER VII

Of new principalities acquired by foreign aid or good fortune.

THOSE who from a private station have ascended to the dignity of princes by the favour of fortune alone meet with few difficulties in their progress, but encounter many in maintaining themselves on the throne. Obstructed by no impediments during their journey, they soar to a great height; but all the difficulties arise after they are quietly seated. These princes are chiefly such as acquire their dominions by money or by favour. Such were the men whom Darius placed in Greece, in the cities of Ionia and of the Hellespont, whom for his own security and glory he raised to the rank of sovereigns. Such were the emperors who from a private station arrived at the empire by corrupting the soldiery. They sustained their elevation only by the pleasure and fortune of those who advanced them, two foundations equally uncertain and insecure. They had

neither the experience nor the power necessary to maintain their position. For unless men possess superior genius or courage, how can they know in what manner to govern others who have themselves always been accustomed to a private station? Deficient in knowledge, they will be equally destitute of power for want of troops on whose attachment and fidelity they can depend. Besides, those states which have suddenly risen, like other things in nature of premature and rapid growth, do not take sufficient root in the minds of men, but they must fall with the first stroke of adversity; unless, indeed, as we have before observed, the princes themselves, so unexpectedly exalted, possess such superior talents that they can discover at once the means of preserving their good fortune and afterwards maintain it by having recourse to the same measures which others had adopted before them.

To adduce instances of supreme power attained by good fortune and superior talent I may refer to two examples which have happened in our own time, *viz.*, Francisco Sforza and Cesare Borgia. The former, by lawful means and by his great abilities, raised himself from a private station to the

dukedom of Milan, and maintained with but little difficulty what had cost him so much trouble to acquire. Cesare Borgia, on the other hand (who is commonly called the Duke of Valentino), attained a sovereignty by the good fortune of his father, which he lost as soon as his father's decease ; though he exerted his utmost endeavours, and employed every means that skill or prudence could suggest, to retain those states which he had acquired by the arms and good fortune of another. For though, as I have before observed, a good foundation may not have been laid before a man arrives at the dominion, it may possibly be accomplished afterwards by a ruler of superior mind ; yet this can only be effected with much difficulty to the architect and danger to the edifice.

If, therefore, we examine the whole conduct of Borgia, we shall see how firm a foundation he had laid for future greatness. This examination will not be superfluous ; for I know no better lesson for the instruction of a prince than is afforded by the actions and example of the duke ; for if the measures he adopted did not succeed it was not his fault, but rather owing to the extreme perversity of fortune. Alexander VI., wishing

to give his son a sovereignty in Italy, had not only present but future difficulties to contend with. In the first place he saw no means of making him sovereign of any state independent of the church ; and if he should endeavour to dismember the ecclesiastical state he knew that the duke of Milan and the Venetians would never consent to it, because Faenza and Rimini were already under the protection of the latter, and the armies of Italy, from whom he might expect any material service, were in the hands of those who had the most reason to apprehend the aggrandisement of the papal power, such as the Orsini, the Colonni, and their partisans.

It was consequently necessary to dissolve these connections and to throw the Italian states into confusion in order to secure the sovereignty of a part. This was easy to accomplish. The Venetians, influenced by motives of their own, had determined to invite the French into Italy. The pope made no opposition to their design ; he even favoured it, by consenting to annul the first marriage of Louis XII., who therefore marched into Italy with the aid of the Venetians and the consent of Alexander. He was no sooner at Milan than the pope availed

himself of his assistance to overrun Romagna, which he acquired by the reputation of his alliance with the king of France.

The duke having thus acquired Romagna and weakened the Colonni, wished at the same time to preserve and increase his own principality; but there were two obstacles in his way. The first arose from his own people, upon whom he could not depend, the other from the designs of the French. He feared that the Orsini, of whose aid he had availed himself, might fail at the critical moment and not only prevent his further acquisitions but even deprive him of those he had made.

And he had reason to apprehend the same conduct on the part of France, and was convinced of the trifling reliance he could place on the Orsini; for after the reduction of Faenza, when he made an attack upon Bologna, they manifested an evident want of activity. As to the king, his intentions were easily discerned; for when he had conquered the duchy of Urbino, and was about to make an irruption into Tuscany, the king obliged him to desist from the enterprise. The duke determined, therefore, neither to depend on fortune nor on the arms of another prince. He began by weakening

the party of the Orsini and the Colonni at Rome by corrupting all the persons of distinction who adhered to them, either by bribes, appointments, or commands suited to their respective qualities, so that in a few months a complete revolution was effected in their attachment, and they all came over to the duke.

Having thus humbled the Colonni he only waited an opportunity for destroying the Orsini. It was not long before one offered, of which he did not fail to avail himself. For the Orsini perceiving, too late, that the power of the duke and the church must be established upon their ruin, called a council of their friends together, at Magione in Perugia, to concert measures of prevention. The consequence of their deliberations was the revolt of Urbino, the disturbances of Romagna, and the infinite dangers which threatened the duke on every side and which he finally surmounted by the aid of the French. His affairs once re-established, he grew weary of relying on France and other foreign allies, and he resolved for the future to rely alone on artifice and dissimulation ; a course in which he so well succeeded that the Orsini were reconciled to him through the intervention

of Signor Paolo, whom he had gained over to his interests by all manner of rich presents and friendly offices. And this man being deceived himself, so far prevailed on the credulity of the rest that they attended the duke at an interview at Sinigaglia, where they were all put to death.

Having thus exterminated the chiefs and converted their partisans into his friends, the duke laid the solid foundations of his power. He made himself master of all Romagna and the duchy of Urbino, and gained the affection of the inhabitants (particularly the former) by giving them a prospect of the advantages they might hope to enjoy from his government. As this latter circumstance is remarkable and worthy of imitation I cannot suffer it to pass unnoticed.

After the duke had possessed himself of Romagna he found it had been governed by a number of petty princes, more addicted to the spoilation than the government of their subjects and whose political weakness rather served to create popular disturbances than to secure the blessings of peace. The country was infested with robbers, torn by actions, and a prey to all the horrors of civil commotions. He found that to

establish tranquillity, order, and obedience a vigorous government was necessary. With these views he appointed Ramiro d'Orco as governor, a cruel but active man to whom he gave the greatest latitude of power. He very soon appeased the disturbances, united all parties and acquired the renown of restoring the whole country to peace.

The duke, however, soon deemed it no longer necessary to continue so rigorous and odious a system. He therefore erected in the midst of the province a court of civil judicature, with a worthy and upright magistrate to preside over it, where every city had its respective advocate. He was aware that the severities of Ramiro had excited some hatred against him and resolved therefore to clear himself from all reproach in the minds of the people and to gain their affection by showing them that the cruelties which had been committed did not originate with him but solely in the ferocious disposition of his minister. Taking advantage therefore of the discontent he caused Ramiro to be massacred one morning in the market-place and his body exposed upon a gibbet, with a cutlass near it stained with blood. The horror of this spectacle satisfied the

resentment of the people and petrified them at once with terror and astonishment.

But to return to our subject. The duke now found himself very powerful; he had delivered himself in a great measure from present enemies and taken effectual means to secure himself by employing against them arms of his own, putting it out of the power of his neighbours to annoy him. To secure and increase his acquisitions he had nothing to fear from anyone but the French. He well knew that the king of France, who had at last perceived his error, would oppose his farther aggrandisement. He resolved, therefore, in the first place to form new connections and alliances, and adopted a system of prevarication with France, as plainly appeared when their army was employed in Naples against the Spaniards, who had laid siege to Gaeta. His design was to fortify himself against them, and he would certainly have succeeded if Alexander VI. had lived a little longer. Such were the methods he took to guard against present dangers.

Against those which were more remote (as he had reason to fear that the new pope would be inimical to him and seek to deprive him of what had been bestowed on him by

his predecessor) he designed to have made four different provisions; in the first place by utterly destroying the families of all those nobles whom he had deprived of their states, so that the future pope might not re-establish them. Secondly by attaching to his interests all the gentry of Rome, in order, by their means, to control the power of the pope. Thirdly by securing a majority in the college of cardinals. Fourthly and lastly by acquiring so much power during the lifetime of his father that he might be enabled of himself to resist the first attack of the enemy.

Three of these designs he had effected before the death of Alexander, and had made every necessary arrangement for availing himself of the fourth. For he had put to death all the nobles whom he had despoiled; at least only very few escaped. He had gained over all the Roman gentry. His party was the strongest in the college of the cardinals; and for a farther augmentation of his power, he designed to have made himself master of Tuscany. He was already master of Perugia and Piombino, and had taken Pisa under his protection, of which he soon after took actual possession. His cautious policy with regard to the French

was no longer necessary, as they had been driven from the kingdom of Naples by the Spaniards, and both of these people were under the necessity of courting his friendship. Lucca and Sienna presently submitted to him, either from fear or hatred of the Florentines. The latter were then unable to defend themselves; and if this had been the case at the time of Alexander's death the duke's power and reputation would have been so great that he might have sustained his dignity without any dependance on fortune or support of others.

But Alexander VI. died five years after he had first unsheathed his sword. He left his son nothing firmly established but the single state of Romagna. All his other conquests were absolutely visionary, as he was not only inclosed between two hostile and powerful armies but was himself attacked by a mortal disease. The duke, however, possessed so much ability and courage, was so well acquainted with the arts either of gaining or ruining others as it suited his purpose, and so strong were the foundations he had laid in that short space of time, that if he had either been in health or not distressed by those two hostile armies, he would have surmounted every difficulty.

As a proof of the soundness of the foundation he had laid, Romagna continued faithful to him and was firm to his interest for above a month afterwards; and although the Baglioni, the Vitelli, and the Orsini all came to Rome at that time, yet, half dead as he was, they feared to attempt anything against him. If he could not elect a pope of his own choice he was at least able to prevent the election of one unfriendly to his interests. And if he had been in health when Alexander died he would have succeeded in all his designs; for he told me himself, the very day that Julius II. was elected, that he had foreseen every obstacle which could arise on the death of his father and had prepared adequate remedies; but that he could not foresee that, at the time of his father's death, his own life would be in such imminent hazard.

Upon a thorough review, therefore, of the duke's conduct and actions I cannot reproach him with having omitted any precaution, and I feel that he merits being proposed as a model to all who by fortune or foreign arms succeed in acquiring sovereignty. For as he had a great spirit and vast designs, he could not have acted otherwise in his circumstances; and if he

miscarried in them, it was solely owing to the sudden death of his father and the illness with which he was himself attacked.

Whoever, therefore, would secure himself in a new principality against the attempts of enemies, and finds it necessary to gain friends, to surmount obstacles by force or cunning, to make himself beloved and feared by the people, respected and obeyed by the soldiery; to destroy all those who can or may oppose his designs; to promulgate new laws in substitution of old ones; to be severe, indulgent, magnanimous, and liberal; to disband an army on which he cannot rely, and raise another in its stead; to preserve the friendship of kings and princes so that they may be ever prompt to oblige and fearful to offend; such a one, I say, cannot have a better or more recent model for his imitation than is afforded by the conduct of Borgia.

The only thing blameable in his actions occurred on the election of Julius II. to the pontificate. He could not, as we have already observed, nominate the prelate whom he wished, but he had it in his power to exclude any one whom he disliked. He ought, therefore, never to have consented to the election of one of those cardinals

whom he had formerly injured and who might have reason to fear him after his election; for men injure others from motives either of hatred or fear. Amongst others whom he had injured were San Pietro ad Vincula, Colonna, San Giorgio, and Ascanio.[1] All the other candidates for the pontificate had cause to fear him, except the Cardinal de Rouen and the Spanish cardinals; the latter of whom were united to him by family connexions, and the Cardinal d'Amboise, who was too powerfully supported by France to have reason to fear him.

The duke, therefore, ought by all means to have procured the election of a Spaniard; or, in case of failure, should have consented to the proposal of the archbishop of Rouen, but on no account to the nomination of San Pietro ad Vincula. It is an error to think that new obligations will extinguish the memory of former injuries in the minds of great men. The duke, therefore, in this election committed a fault which proved the occasion of his utter ruin.

[1] Ascanio Sforza.

CHAPTER VIII

Of those who have attained sovereignty by their crimes.

As sovereignty may be attained in two ways, without being indebted either to fortune or to virtue, it is proper that I should here detail them both ; though the examination of one of them might perhaps be more appropriately placed under the article ' Republics.' The first is pursued by usurpers, who attain power by nefarious means, and the second by such private individuals as are raised by their fellow citizens to the dignity of princes of their native country.

I shall cite two examples of the former, one of ancient and the other of modern date ; and without entering farther into the merits of the case, they will suffice for those who are under the necessity of following them. Agathocles, a Sicilian, an individual of the lowest class, raised himself to the throne of Syracuse. He was the son of a potter, of dissolute and wicked conduct in every

relation of life; but he conducted himself with infinite ability and so much courage as well as strength of mind and body that, having devoted all his attention to arms, he rose through the several gradations of the profession till at length he became prætor of Syracuse. Having arrived at this rank he resolved to maintain it, to make himself sovereign and retain by violence, and independently of every other person, what had been granted to him by the public voice. Having well weighed his purpose, he held a communication with Hamilcar, who then commanded the Carthaginian army in Sicily.

Agathocles one morning assembled the people and the senate of Syracuse, under the pretext of deliberating on public affairs. At a given signal he caused all the senators and the richest of the inhabitants to be massacred by the soldiery; after whose death he assumed the sovereignty, and enjoyed it without obstruction or molestation. Twice defeated by the Carthaginians and at length besieged by them in Syracuse, he not only defended himself in the city but, leaving part of his troops to sustain the siege, he, with the remainder, passed over into Africa, where he pressed the

Carthaginians so closely that they soon raised the siege and, reduced to extremities, were compelled to content themselves with Africa and abandon Sicily to him.

In examining the conduct of Agathocles we shall find scarcely anything that can be attributed to fortune. It was not by favour but by his own genius that he attained the sovereignty amidst a thousand obstacles and a thousand dangers, and afterwards maintained what he had acquired by dint of courage and resolution. Still it must not be called virtue to murder one's fellow citizens or to sacrifice one's friends, or be insensible to the voice of faith, pity, or religion. These qualities may lead to sovereignty but not to glory.

Considering the intrepidity of Agathocles both in encountering and escaping dangers, as well as his invincible firmness in adversity, he cannot be deemed inferior to the greatest warriors ; nevertheless his inhumanity, his ferocious cruelty and his innumerable crimes, prevent him from being included in the rank of celebrated men ; we must not, therefore, attribute to fortune or virtue what he accomplished without the assistance of either of them.

The other instance happened in our own

times, under the pontificate of Alexander VI. Oliverotto da Fermo, having in his infancy lost both his parents, was educated by his maternal uncle, Giovanni Fogliani, and while yet very young was placed under Paolo Vitelli to learn the art of war and qualify himself for some distinguished rank. After the death of Paolo he served under his brother, Vitellozzo and in a very short time, by his own courage and ability, he became the first warrior of his day; but deeming it beneath him to remain any longer dependent, he resolved, with the aid of a few citizens of Fermo who preferred slavery to the liberty of their country and with the assistance of Vitellozzo, to seize upon his native city. He wrote to his uncle Fogliani that, having been absent for many years, he was desirous of returning to see his country and take possession of his patrimony. That as he had laboured so hard to acquire a reputation, he wished to afford his fellow citizens some proof that his time had not been misspent, and consequently he intended to present himself before them in a distinguished manner, accompanied by a hundred horse, consisting of his friends and followers; and he prayed that the inhabitants of Fermo might receive him with marks of respect,

as a testimony grateful to himself and honourable to his uncle, who had superintended his education.

Giovanni Fogliani did not fail to fulfil his nephew's intentions; he was received with marks of distinction by the inhabitants of Fermo, and lodged in his uncle's house, where Oliverotto employed several days in making the necessary preparations for the execution of his guilty designs. He then gave a grand entertainment, to which he invited Giovanni Fogliani and the principal persons of the city. The repast being ended, Oliverotto artfully turned the conversation upon the power of Pope Alexander, and of his son Cesare Borgia, and their several enterprises. Giovanni and the others gave their opinion in turn, when Oliverotto suddenly rose, saying that it would be more proper to discuss such subjects privately. He accordingly retired into a chamber, into which he was followed by his uncle and the others. Scarcely were they seated when the armed soldiers, who had been till then concealed, rushed out and massacred Giovanni and the whole party. After which Oliverotto mounted his horse, traversed the city, besieged the palace of the chief magistrate, and forced him to swear obedience and to

establish a government of which he (Oliverotto) was to be the prince. He put to death all the discontented who had the power to injure him; he established new laws, both civil and military; and in the space of one year he had so effectually consolidated his power that he was not only firmly established in the sovereignty of Fermo, but had rendered himself formidable to all his neighbours. His expulsion would have been as difficult as that of Agathocles if he had not suffered himself to be deceived by Borgia, who, as we have already shown, entrapped him at Sinigaglia with the Orsini and Vitelli, a year after the parricide of his uncle; he was there strangled, with Vitellozzo, his master in the art of war and wickedness.

It may seem strange that Agathocles and others of the same stamp should be able not only to support their power so long at home but to defend themselves against the attacks of foreign enemies without being in danger of conspiracies from their fellow citizens, notwithstanding their many acts of perfidy and violence, whilst the cruelties of others have rendered them unable to secure themselves in their usurpations, even in times of peace, to say nothing of war. This seems to me to have happened accordingly

as their cruelty was well or ill applied. I say 'well applied' (if we may, indeed, speak well of what is evil) when it is only once exercised, and that, too, when it is dictated by the absolute necessity of self-preservation, and even then converted as much as possible to the benefit of the public. But it is ill applied when, though practised with caution and reserve in the beginning, it increases instead of diminishes with time. The proceedings of the former have sometimes been suffered to prosper both by God and man, of which Agathocles is an example. But in the latter case self-support becomes impossible.

Whence I conclude that the usurper of a state should commit all the cruelties which his safety renders necessary at once, that he may never have cause to repeat them: by not renewing them, he will acquire the loyalty of his new subjects, and by favours he will rivet their attachment. If from bad counsel or timidity he takes another course, he must ever have a poinard in his hand, and he can never rely on his subjects, whose confidence he has destroyed by new and repeated attacks. Matters of severity, therefore, should be finished at one blow; for when time is allowed for resentment, the

wound is not so deep; but benefits should be frugally dispensed, and by little at a time, that they may be the better relished. Above all things a prince should live with his subjects on such terms that no change of fortune may oblige him to alter his conduct towards them. For in times of difficulty, severity is unseasonable and kindness unprofitable; it would be looked upon as extorted by necessity, and undeserving of thanks.

CHAPTER IX

Of civil principalities.

Let us now consider another point. A private individual may attain sovereignty by the favour of his fellow citizens and without either violence or treason. This is what I call a civil principality and is not to be acquired either by merit or fortune alone, but by a lucky sort of craft. The sovereign power is obtained by favour of the people or the nobility; for the different parties in a state are reduced to these two elements, one springing from the aversion of the people to the oppressive government of the nobles, the other from the desire of these latter to govern and oppress the people. Now, this diversity of views and interests produces a struggle, which must always end in establishing either a principality or a free government, or in downright licentiousness.

A principality emanates either from the nobles or the people, according as it operates to their respective advantage; for when the

former are too weak to cope with the people, they have often no other means of subduing them than by advancing from their own class one whom they nominate prince, that, under the mask of an acknowledged authority, they may indulge their desire of domination. The people, likewise, when they can no longer resist the oppression of the nobles, throw all their power into the hands of one person alone, and appoint him prince, to defend and protect them.

A prince who is raised by the favour of the nobles will find much difficulty in supporting himself, because he is surrounded by men who, thinking themselves still his equals, submit reluctantly to his authority. On the other hand, he who is raised to that dignity by the will of the people stands alone, and has few around him who would dare resist his measures.

Besides, the people can be contented without the exercise of injustice; not so the nobles: the latter seek to practise tyranny, the former merely to avoid it. Moreover, a prince who is opposed by the nobles may, by reason of their small number, easily restrain them within the limits of duty; but how could he assure himself of the obedience and fidelity of the people, if

he separated his own interests from theirs?

The worst that he has to expect from the people in such circumstances is that they will desert him; but if the nobles are disaffected, they may not only desert but conspire against him. For as they generally have more penetration than the common people, they are likely to secure themselves in time and go over to the more fortunate competitors.

In short, it is always necessary to live with the same people; but a prince has no occasion to continue the same set of nobles, whom he can at pleasure disgrace or honour, elevate or destroy. But to explain the subject more fully, I propose to examine the two points of view in which a prince ought to consider his nobles; and first, whether they are entirely attached to his fortune or not. Those who give him proofs of their zeal and devotion deserve his honour and esteem, provided they are not rapacious. But those who do not, perhaps have no other motive for their coolness than a natural timidity and want of spirit. In this case he may employ them, and, moreover, with great advantage, particularly if they are able in council; for then they will honour him in prosperity, and in adversity they will do him no injury. But when they keep aloof

from ambition or some other latent cause, it is a proof that they more regard their own welfare than that of the prince. He therefore ought to consider them declared enemies who, not content with abandoning his interests, would not hesitate to take up arms against him in adversity.

A prince, therefore, who owes his exaltation to the favour of the people should exert himself to preserve their affection—an easy matter, since they desire nothing more than security from oppression. But one who is advanced by the favour of the nobles and in opposition to the will of the people should earnestly strive to gain their attachment, a task in which he will infallibly succeed by protecting them against those who seek to oppress them.

And as it is natural when we receive favours from those from whom we only expected evil to feel more obliged to such benefactors, so the attachment of a people to a prince who treats them well will be more certain then if he had attained his rank by their instrumentality. Now, the goodwill of the people may be secured in various ways, unnecessary here to specify, as it is always difficult to lay down a general rule adapted to a variety of different circumstances,

The only resource upon which a prince can rely in adversity is the affection of his people. When Nabis, prince of Sparta, was attacked by the victorious army of the Romans and by the other states of Greece, he defended himself by means of a small number of citizens; if the whole people had been his enemy he could never have succeeded by employing such means.

Let no one quote the old proverb against me that 'he who relies on the people builds on a sandy foundation.' It may be true in the case of a single citizen opposed to powerful enemies or oppressed by the magistrates, as happened to the Gracchi at Rome and to Giorgio Scali at Florence; but a prince who is not deficient in courage and is able to command, who, not dejected by ill fortune nor deficient in necessary preparations, knows how to preserve order in his states by his own valour and conduct, need never repent of having laid the foundation of his security on his people's affection.

But a prince incurs great risk who seeks to change a civil principality to an absolute rule, because he must govern entirely or by the assistance of the magistracy. In the latter case his government necessarily becomes weak and precarious, as he must

depend on those to whom he has confided his authority, and on the first disturbance they will immediately rebel or refuse to execute his commands, in which juncture he can no longer think of exercising absolute authority; for subjects who are accustomed to obey the magistrates in time of trouble will not acknowledge any other authority, nor can the prince then find many persons in whom he may confide. He can no longer regulate his conduct by the experience of ordinary times, when his authority is readily acknowledged; for at these periods every man presses around him, and, as long as there is no prospect of death, seems resolved to die in his defence; but when storms arise and he needs their assistance, not a man of them is to be seen, and the prince unhappily finds too late how little sincerity there was in their ardour. Now, this experiment of absolute power is the more dangerous as it is impossible to try it more than once.

A wise prince should therefore at all times conduct himself in such a manner that at all times, and under every change of circumstance, his subjects may feel the want of his directing hand, and then he may rely on their unshaken fidelity.

CHAPTER X

How we ought to estimate the strength of governments.

It is also important in the study of different governments to examine if the prince be powerful enough in time of need, to defend himself by his own forces, without having recourse to the assistance of his allies. To place this point in the clearest view I may observe that those only can so defend themselves who have men and money enough to bring an army into the field and give battle to whoever shall attack them. But wretched indeed is the situation of that prince who is reduced to the necessity of shutting hinself up in his native city, in order there to await the enemy's approach. I have already discussed the first point and shall have occasion to return to it again.

As to the second, I cannot but warn princes of the necessity they are under to fortify and provision the place of their residence, without troubling themselves about the rest

of the country; for if, as I have already observed and shall again have occasion in the sequel to repeat, they have in addition to this precaution learned the art of gaining their people's affection, they will be secure from all danger. Men are naturally cautious of engaging in difficult enterprises without some appearance of success, and it is never prudent to attack a prince whose capital is in a good state of defence and who is on good terms with his subjects.

The cities of Germany enjoy a very extensive liberty; they possess a territory of inconsiderable extent and obey the emperor when they please, under no apprehension of being attacked either by him or by others, for the towns are defended by strong walls and deep ditches, and are provided with artillery and provisions for a year, so that the siege of these cities would be both long and painful. Added to this, they are always provided with the means of employing the people during the same space of time, so as to support them without the assistance of the public purse. Moreover, their troops are regularly exercised in military evolutions and their regulations in that respect are wise and well observed.

A prince, therefore, who possesses a well

fortified city and is respected by his people can hardly be attacked with advantage, because the affairs of this world are so liable to change that it would be almost impossible for an enemy to keep the field for the space of a year before a place so defended.

It may perhaps be objected that the people who possess property in the country and who see their lands ravaged will lose their patience and that their attachment to their prince will not long continue against the inconveniences of a long siege and the desire of preserving their property. I answer that a prudent and spirited prince will easily surmount these obstacles, either by inspiring the people with hopes that their sufferings will soon be over, or with a dread of the resentment and cruelty of the conqueror, or by taking other proper means to appease those who are clamorous.

To this may be added that the enemy commences his ravage of the country immediately he enters it, and at that time the besieged are most animated and disposed to defend themselves ; in which case the prince has still less to apprehend, because before their ardour has cooled, the inhabitants, perceiving that all the mischief has been accomplished and the loss irretrievable, will

evince the more attachment to their prince in proportion as their sacrifices are greater. For such is the nature of mankind that they become as strongly attached to others by the benefits they render, as by the favours they receive.

All these considerations persuade me that a prince who is wise and provident may without difficulty succeed in sustaining the courage of his people under the distresses of a siege, if he take care that they are well provided with the means necessary for their sustenance and defence.

CHAPTER XI

Of ecclesiastical principalities.

IT now only remains to treat of ecclesiastical principalities, which are more easy to preserve than to acquire ; the reason of which consists in this, that whilst on the one hand they can only be attained by means of personal merit or some fortunate event, on the other this species of government is founded on ancient religious institutions, which operates so powerfully that a prince may preserve possession of them with but little trouble, let his mode of government be what it may. Ecclesiastical princes are the only ones who can possess states and subjects without governing or defending them ; the only ones whose territories, nevertheless, continue respected and whose subjects never possess either the inclination or the means of shaking off their dominion. In a word, they are the happiest and most secure princes in the world. As they are under the superintendence and direction of an Almighty

Being whose dispensations are beyond our weak understandings, it would be presumptuous for me to discuss these matters.

But if any one should inquire by what means the church has attained so great a degree of temporal power since the pontificate of Alexander VI. as not only to make France tremble, but to drive her armies out of Italy and overwhelm the Venetians, though before that time the princes of Italy, and even the poorest barons and most insignificant nobles, regarded the bishop of Rome with indifference in relation to his temporal power, it may seem proper to give a brief account of the matter and to recapitulate the facts which are already generally known.

Before Charles VIII., king of France, entered Italy, the sovereignty was divided between the king of Naples, the Pope, the Venetians, the duke of Milan, and the Florentines; the political system of those princes was confined to these points, to prevent any foreign power from obtaining a footing in the country, and to render it impossible that any one of their own states should encroach on the other.

Those who created the most discontent were the Pope and the Venetians, and to restrain the excesses of the latter nothing

less was necessary than a league between all the rest, as we observed in the measures adopted for the defence of Ferrara. As to the Pope, his forces consisted of the Roman barons, who, being divided into two factions, the Orsini and the Colonni, were always in arms to revenge their own quarrels, even under the eye of the Pope, whose authority was unavailing and who was compelled to suffer these intestine feuds.

From time to time popes arose such as Sixtus V., who repressed these abuses; but the short duration of the pontificate was insufficient to destroy the cause. The efforts of these pontiffs were confined to the humiliation of one of the rival factions, which triumphed in its turn under his successor. And thus the military strength of the Popes became exhausted in Italy.

Things were in this condition when Alexander VI. was raised to the pontifical chair; none of his predecessors had ever proved to the world what a pope was capable of doing by means of men and money. I have mentioned elsewhere his conduct on the entry of the French into Italy by the Duke Valentino; undoubtedly his intention was not so much to aggrandise the church as the duke; yet on the death of that nobleman

and of the holy pontiff, the church reaped all the advantage of his interference.

Julius II., the successor of Alexander, found the dominions of the church increased by the addition of Romagna, and the factions of the Roman barons extinguished by the acute wisdom and courage of his predecessor, who also taught him political economy. Julius improved upon all the plans of Alexander; he added Bologna to the states of the holy see, rendered the Venetians unable to disturb his repose, and drove the French out of Italy; a success the more glorious as this pope laboured more for the good of the church than his own private interest.

Julius left the Orsini and the Colonni as he found them when he ascended the papal throne; and though the seeds of ancient divisions yet subsisted, they could not shoot forth under so powerful a government; and even if they had been inclined to raise fresh disturbances, two circumstances prevented it; first, the church was grown so powerful, that it inspired a general dread; and, secondly, there were no cardinals in either of the rival families; for the cardinals were sure to avail themselves of the credit and the influence which their dignity gave them

to foment, both within and without, those disturbances in which the nobles of both factions were obliged to take part. So that we may safely aver that the discord between the barons always originated in the ambition of the prelates.

The reigning pontiff therefore found the church in the meridian of power; but if Alexander and Julius gave it stability by their courage, everything promises us that Leo X. will crown the work by his goodness and by the many other estimable qualities which he possesses.

CHAPTER XII

Of the different kind of military establishments, and of mercenary troops.

HAVING examined in detail the different kinds of political states which I propose to investigate, and inquired into the causes of their decline as well as their prosperity, and also the means by which many of them have been acquired or preserved, it remains for me now to refer to the different kinds of military forces, whether for the purposes of attack or defence.

I have already said that princes who wish their power to be durable should fix it on a solid foundation. Now the principal foundations of all states, whether ancient, modern, or mixed, are good laws and a proper military force to support them; but as good laws can never be of any effect without good troops, and as these two elements of political power cannot be separated, it will be sufficient that I confine my view, for the present, to one of them.

Troops which serve for the defence of a state are either national, foreign, or mixed. Those of the second class, whether they serve as auxiliaries or as mercenaries, are useless and dangerous; and the prince who relies on such soldiers will never be secure, because they are always ambitious, disunited, unfaithful, and undisciplined. Brave amongst friends but cowardly in the face of an enemy, they neither fear God nor keep faith with man; so that the prince who employs them can only retard his fall by delaying to put their valour to the proof, and, in short, they plunder the state in time of peace as much as the enemy does in time of war. How, indeed, should it be otherwise? A military force of this description can never serve a state but for the sake of pay, which is never so high as to induce them to purchase it by the sacrifice of their lives; they are willing enough to serve in the time of peace, but the moment war is declared it is impossible to keep them to their colours.

This is a matter easily proved, for Italy would not now be ruined had she not trusted so many years to mercenary troops, who at first rendered some service to the state but who showed the extent of their bravery on

the appearance of an enemy. Thus Charles VII., king of France, conquered Italy, as it were, by a piece of chalk,[1] and those who attribute our misfortunes to our own errors seem to do so with reason. Doubtless our own errors produced these misfortunes, and as they were committed chiefly by princes they have themselves paid the severest penalty.

To place this matter in a clearer point of view I may observe that the commanders of these troops are either men of conduct or abilities, or they are not. If they are, they cannot be trusted, because their own elevation can only be obtained by oppressing the prince who employs them or others against his will; if they are not, they must hasten the ruin of the state they serve so ill.

I may perhaps be told that every other commander will act in the same manner. To this I answer that every war is carried on either by a prince or a republic. A prince ought to put himself at the head of his armies. A republic ought to confer the

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[1] *bon mot* of Alexander VI., who said that when the Frenchmen came into Italy, it was only necessary for them to mark the doors of their billets with chalk.

command on one of her own citizens, who may be superseded if he prove unequal to the task, or continued in his post if he behave well, but under such restrictions that he cannot exceed his orders.

Experience has shown that either princes or republics can effect great achievements of themselves, and that mercenary soldiers must inevitably injure both; and as to republics, I may observe that they are more secure against the oppression of him who commands their armies when they employ national troops instead of foreign mercenaries. Rome and Sparta by these means maintained their liberties for several ages, and the Swiss would not at this moment be so free but from the consciousness of being well armed.

The Carthaginians and Thebans are striking examples of the truth of what I have advanced as to the danger of employing foreign troops. The first, though their generals were chosen from their own citizens, had nearly fallen a prey to the tyranny of foreign mercenaries at the conclusion of their first war against the Romans: and as to the Thebans, it is well known that Philip of Macedon, having on the death of Epaminondas obtained the command of their

troops, had no sooner conquered their enemies than he deprived them of their liberties.

Sforza, who had been employed by Johanna II., queen of Naples, as commander-in-chief of her forces, suddenly deserted her service and left her completely disarmed, and her distress obliged her to seek the aid of the king of Arragon in order to save her kingdom. And Francisco Sforza, son of the former, after having defeated the Venetians at Caravaggio, united with them for the purpose of oppressing the Milanese, who on the death of their duke Filippo placed him in command of their troops.

If it be objected that the Florentines and Venetians have never failed to increase their states by the assistance of foreign soldiers, and that their generals have always served them well, without any one of them having raised himself to the sovereignty: to this I answer that the Florentines have been extremely fortunate; for some of their best generals, whose ambition they might have had reason to dread, either were not victorious or else they met many obstacles in their way, whilst others turned their ambition upon other objects. Amongst these was

Giovanni Acuto,[1] whose fidelity was, for this reason, never put to the proof. But every one must allow that if he had conquered the Florentines would have been at his mercy.

If Braccio and Sforza made no attempt against the state they served, their moderation arose from their being rivals, and on this account they always acted as a check upon each other. It is well known that the son of the latter turned his ambition against Lombardy, and Braccio against the ecclesiastical state and the kingdom of Naples. But let us turn to events of our own day.

The Florentines conferred the command of their troops on Paolo Vitelli, a very prudent man who, from a private station, had been raised to this post in consequence of the great reputation he had acquired. If he had succeeded in reducing Pisa, the liberties of the Florentines, or their political existence, would have been brought to a close ; had he gone over to the enemy, he would have completed their destruction.

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[1] An English knight, Sir John Hawkwood. After fighting in the English wars of Edward III. he went into Italy with a body of troops who became known as " The White Company." He was born in Essex about 1320, and married a daughter of Bernabo Visconti.

As to the Venetians, they have never been indebted for their success to any but their own arms, at least in a maritime warfare; for the decline of their power may be dated from the time when they became ambitious of conquests by land and of adopting the manners and customs of the other states of Italy.

They had, however, but little to fear from the ambition of their generals whilst their possessions by land were inconsiderable, because they were still sustained by the splendour of their ancient power; but they perceived their error in extending them when, by the superior conduct of Carmignuola, they had defeated the duke of Milan, for perceiving that though he was an able commander he yet endeavoured to prolong the war, they judged with reason that they could never expect to conquer in opposition to the will of this general; and, therefore, not being able to dismiss him from his command without losing what they had gained by his valour, they determined upon having him assassinated.

The Venetians subsequently had for their generals Bartolomeo da Bergama, Roberto da San Severino, and the count of Pitigliano, from whose conduct they had reason to

expect rather loss than advantage; as, indeed, was the case afterwards in the affair of Vaila, when they lost in one day the fruit of eight hundred years of labour and difficulty. The successes which they obtained by their military forces were slow and feeble, but their defeats were sudden and almost miraculous.

Since these examples have led me to speak of Italy and the melancholy experience she has acquired of the danger resulting from employing foreign troops, I shall trace the subject to its source, in order that the knowledge of the origin and progress of this kind of soldiery may prevent the most disastrous effects, of which they are frequently the cause. In the first place, we should recollect that when the empire had lost the power and consideration it had ever enjoyed in Italy, and when the authority of the Pope had become permanent, that country was divided into several states.

The greater part of the large cities took up arms against the nobles, who, supported by the emperor, made them groan under the most cruel oppression. The Pope seconded their enterprises, and thereby increased his temporal power.

Many others fell under the domination of

their citizens; so that Italy became subjected to the church and to a few republics. The ecclesiastical princes, strangers to the art of war, commenced employing mercenary soldiers. Alberigo da Como, born in Romagna, was the first who brought this kind of military force into high credit. It was in his school that Sforza and Braccio, who were then the arbiters of Italy, were educated. To them succeeded many others who have, till the present moment, commanded armies in this country.

It is owing to their brilliant exploits that Italy was invaded by Charles VIII., ravaged and plundered by Lewis XII., oppressed by Ferdinand and insulted by the Swiss. The chiefs of these military forces began by dispensing with the infantry, to enhance the reputation of their own forces; for, as they had no dominions of their own, and being mere soldiers of fortune, they could undertake nothing with a small body of infantry, nor could they support a more considerable force. They found therefore that cavalry was more advantageous, a small number of which enabled them to support their reputation; so that not more than two thousand foot soldiers were considered necessary in an army of twenty thousand

men. In addition to this, in order to secure themselves against all apprehension of danger, they introduced the custom of not killing anyone in a battle, but contented themselves with making prisoners, whom they afterwards liberated without ransom. They never made any assault by night, at which time the beseiged equally abstained from making a sortie ; they never encamped but in the spring, nor did they even make entrenchments in their camp. A discipline, invented by these commanders to avoid danger and trouble, which has reduced Italy to a state of slavery and lost her the high consideration she had till then enjoyed.

CHAPTER XIII

Of auxiliary, mixed, and national troops.

AUXILIARY troops are those which a prince borrows of his allies to assist and defend him. Pope Julius II. having in the enterprise against Ferrara made a lamentable experiment of the danger of employing mercenaries, had recourse to Ferdinand king of Spain, who entered into a treaty to send troops to his assistance. This kind of military force may perhaps be useful to the state by whom it is provided, but it is always injurious to the prince by whom it is employed. For when defeated, the prince suffers the consequences; and when victorious he lies at the mercy of such an army. Ancient history is replete with facts in support of this doctrine. To confine myself, however, to a recent example. Julius II, being desirous to possess himself of Ferrara, was advised to confide the execution of this expedition to a foreigner. Fortunately for him, however, an incident took place

which prevented the consequences of such an imprudence ; for his auxiliaries having been defeated at Ravenna, the conqueror was unexpectedly attacked by the Swiss, who put him to flight ; so that this pontiff escaped both from his enemy, who was in his turn defeated, and from his auxiliaries, who had but a small share in obtaining the victory.

The Florentines wishing to besiege Pisa, and being entirely destitute of national troops, took into their service ten thousand French, an error which brought them into greater danger than they had ever before encountered. The emperor of Constantinople being threatened by his neighbours, caused ten thousand Turks to enter Greece, who at the end of the war refused to quit the country, and that province accordingly became subject to the infidels.

The prince, therefore, who wishes to impair his own power, has only to make use of this kind of military force, which is even worse than mercenary troops ; because the former are united and under a commander of their own. Mercenaries, on the contrary, being raised by the prince who takes them into his pay, and not forming a separate body, do not so easily become dangerous to him who employs them, after they have

succeeded in vanquishing his enemies. Their general, appointed by the prince himself, cannot immediately acquire such authority over his troops as to turn their arms against his employer. Finally there seems to me to be far greater danger from the valour of auxiliary troops than from the cowardice of mercenaries ; and a wise prince will prefer being defeated at the head of his own troops than to conquer with auxiliaries, as that deserves not the name of victory which is gained by foreign aid.

In proof of this assertion I must continue to quote the example of Cesare Borgia. He made himself master of Forli and Imola with auxiliaries, wholly French ; but perceiving that he could not rely on their fidelity he had recourse to mercenaries, those who commanded the Orsini and the Vitelli, from whom he thought he had less to fear. But finding afterwards that these were as dangerous as the others, he resolved to get rid of them all, and from that time he never employed any other than his own national troops.

From hence we may see the immense difference between these two descriptions of troops, if we only compare the duke's campaigns, when he was dependent on the forces

of the Orsini and the Vitelli, with those when he employed none but his own troops; for he never displayed the whole extent of his abilities till he was absolute master of his soldiers.

I wish to confine myself to examples drawn from the modern history of Italy; but that of Hiero of Syracuse, of whom I have already spoken, is so strongly to the point that it should not be omitted. That city had confided to him the command of its troops, which were composed of foreigners in its pay. But the general soon found how very little he could depend upon these mercenaries, the conduct of whose generals was nearly on a par with that of our present Italians. And seeing that he could not without danger either employ or disband them, he determined to have them all massacred, and afterwards carried on the war with his own troops only.

I may also refer to a trait of history drawn from the Old Testament. David having offered to fight Goliath, the formidable Philistine, Saul, in order to inspire him with greater ardour, armed him with his sword, his helmet, and his cuirass; but David replied that they would rather prove an incumbrance than a service to him and

declared that he would fight the enemy only with his sling. For the arms of one man will never perfectly suit another, they are either too unwieldy or too wide, or too strait, or in some other way troublesome or inconvenient.

Charles VII., the father of Louis XI., after having by his valour delivered France from the English, convinced of the necessity of fighting with his own troops, established throughout all France companies of artillery, cavalry, and infantry. His son, Louis XI., afterwards disbanded the infantry, for whom he substituted the Swiss. This fault, which was continued by his successors, is the source of all the evils experienced by the state at this moment. By giving a preference to the Swiss soldiery these kings have discredited their own ; and the latter, from being always accustomed to fight in the company of the Swiss, have come to the conclusion that they cannot conquer without them. So that the French are afraid either to attack the Swiss or to go to war without them.

The armies of France are therefore partly mercenary and partly national. This admixture renders them better than troops which are either all mercenary or all auxiliaries, but far inferior to those which are

raised in their own country; and all this affords sufficient proof that France would have been rendered invincible by adhering to the military regulations established by Charles VII. But such is the imprudence of mankind in general that they eagerly embrace expedients which seem to promise a little present advantage, blind to the danger which is concealed under a flattering appearance (as I before remarked of hectic fevers).

The prince, therefore, who does not apprehend evils till it is too late to prevent them cannot be truly called a wise man, yet this is a blessing which is bestowed on few.

The first cause of the decline of the Roman empire arose from taking the Goths into their pay, which brought these barbarians into repute at the expense of the Roman soldiery.

A prince, therefore, who cannot defend his dominions without the assistance of foreign troops continues ever at the mercy of fortune and is without resource in seasons of adversity. It is a generally received maxim that there is nothing so weak as a power that is not supported by itself, that is to say, that is not defended by its own citizens or subjects, but by foreigners,

whether allies or mercenaries. It would be easy to establish a national force by employing the means which Philip the father of Alexander the Great adopted with so much ability, and which several other states, both monarchical and republican, employed; of these I have already spoken, and to them I again refer my readers.

CHAPTER XIV

Of the duties of a prince relative to his military force.

PRINCES ought, therefore, to make the art of war their sole study and occupation, for it is peculiarly the science of those who govern. War and the several sorts of discipline and institutions relative to it should be his only study, the only profession he should follow, and the object he ought always to have in view. By this means princes can maintain possession of their dominions, and private individuals are sometimes raised thereby to supreme authority; whilst on the other hand we frequently see princes shamefully reduced to nothing by suffering themselves to be enfeebled by slothful inactivity. I repeat, therefore, that it is by a neglect of this art that states are lost, and by cultivating it that they are acquired.

Francisco Sforza from a private station attained the rank of duke of Milan by having an army always at his disposal; and by a

deviation from this rule his children, who succeeded to the dukedom, were reduced to the station of private individuals. And this is not surprising: for in the first place nothing is so likely to impair our esteem for the character of a prince as to see him destitute of a military force; and, as I shall endeavour to prove hereafter, a prince should most particularly beware of falling into general contempt.

We cannot establish a comparison between men who are armed and those who are not so; and it would be equally absurd to suppose that the disarmed should command and the others obey. A prince who is ignorant of the art of war can never enjoy repose or safety amongst armed subjects; he will always be to them an object of contempt, as they to him will justly be subjects of suspicion; how is it possible then that they should act in concert? In short, a prince who does not understand the art of war can never be esteemed by his troops, nor can he ever confide in them.

It is necessary therefore that princes should pay their whole attention to the art of war, which includes mental labour and study as well as the military exercise. To begin with the latter, the prince should take

the utmost care that his troops be well disciplined and regularly exercised. The chase is well adapted to inure the body to fatigue and to all the intemperances of weather. This exercise will also teach him to observe the sources and situations as well as the nature of rivers and marshes; to measure the extent of plains and the declivity of mountains. By these means he will acquire a knowledge of the topography of a country which he has to defend, and will easily habituate himself to select the places where war may be best carried on. For the plain and valleys of Tuscany resemble more or less those of other countries; so that a perfect knowledge of one will enable them to form a tolerably accurate judgment of the other.

This study is particularly useful to commanders. A general who neglects it will never know where to look for an enemy, nor how to conduct his troops, nor to encamp, nor the proper time to attack. The Greek and Roman historians deservedly praised Philopomenes, prince of Achaia, for his application to the study of war in time of peace. He was accustomed in his travels to stop and ask his friends which of two armies would have the advantage if one were posted on such or such a hill and the

other in such a particular spot; or in what manner this one, if commanded by himself, should join and give battle to the other; what steps he ought to take in order to secure a retreat or pursue the enemy, in case he should retire? He thus proposed to them every case which might happen in war, listened attentively to their opinions, and then gave his own, together with the reasons on which it was founded. By these means he was always prepared to meet unforeseen events.

As to that part of military science which is learned in the closet, a prince ought to read history and to pay particular attention to the achievements of great generals, and the cause of their victories and defeats; but above all he should follow the example of those great men who, when they select a model, resolve to follow in his steps. It was thus that Alexander the Great immortalised himself by following the example of Achilles, Cæsar by imitating Alexander, and Scipio by copying Cyrus. If we take the trouble to compare the life of the latter Roman with that of Cyrus, we shall see how nearly Scipio copied the modesty, affability, humanity, liberality, and the other virtues with which Xenophon adorns his hero.

It is thus a wise prince should conduct himself and so employ his time during peace that if fortune should change he may be prepared equally for her frowns and her favours.

CHAPTER XV

What deserves praise or blame in men, and above all in princes.

It now remains to show in what manner a prince should behave to his subjects and friends. This matter having been already discussed by others, it may seem arrogant in me to pursue it farther, especially if I should differ in opinion from them; but as I write only for those who possess sound judgment, I thought it better to treat this subject as it really is in fact, than to amuse the imagination with visionary models of republics and governments which have never existed. For the manner in which men now live is so different from the manner in which they ought to live that he who deviates from the common course of practice and endeavours to act as duty dictates necessarily ensures his own destruction. Thus a good man and one who wishes to prove himself so in all respects must be undone in a contest with so many who are

evilly disposed. A prince who wishes to maintain his power ought therefore to learn that he should not be always good, and must use that knowledge as circumstances and the exigencies of his own affairs may seem to require.

Laying aside, then, the false ideas which have been formed as to princes, and adhering only to those which are true, I say that all men, and especially princes, are marked and distinguished by some quality or other which entails either reputation or dishonour. For instance, men are liberal or parsimonious, honourable or dishonourable, effeminate or pusillanimous, courageous or enterprising, humane or cruel, affable or haughty, wise or debauched, honest or dishonest, good tempered or surly, sedate or inconsiderate, religious or impious, and so forth.

It would, doubtless, be happy for a prince to unite in himself every species of good quality; but as our nature does not allow so great a perfection, a prince should have prudence enough to avoid those defects and vices which may occasion his ruin; and as to those who can only compromise his safety and the possession of his dominions, he ought, if possible, to guard against them; but if he cannot succeed in this, he need not

embarrass himself in escaping the scandal of those vices, but should devote his whole energies to avoid those which may cause his ruin. He should not shrink from encountering some blame on account of vices which are important to the support of his states; for everything well considered, there are some things having the appearance of virtues which would prove the ruin of a prince should he put them in practice, and others upon which, though seemingly bad and vicious, his actual welfare and security entirely depend.

CHAPTER XVI

Of liberality and economy.

To begin with the first qualities of the above-mentioned, I must observe that it is for the interest of a prince to be accounted liberal, but dangerous so to exercise his liberality that he is thereby neither feared nor respected. I will be more explicit. If a prince be only liberal as far as it suits his purposes, that is to say within certain bounds, he will please but few and will be called selfish. A prince who wishes to gain the reputation of being liberal should be regardless of expense ; but then to support this reputation he will often be reduced to the necessity of levying taxes on his subjects and adopting every species of fiscal resource which cannot fail to make him odious. Besides exhausting the public treasure by his prodigality his credit will be destroyed, and he will run the risk of losing his dominions on the first reverse of fortune, his liberality, as it always happens, having ensured him

more enemies than friends. And, what is worse, he cannot retrace his steps and replenish his finances without being charged with avarice.

A prince, therefore, who cannot be liberal without prejudicing his state should not trouble himself much about the imputation of being covetous; for he will be esteemed liberal in time, when people see that by parsimony he has improved his revenue, become able to defend his dominions, and even to undertake useful enterprises without the aid of new taxes; then the many from whom he takes nothing will deem him sufficiently liberal, and the few only, whose expectations he has failed to realise, will accuse him of avarice. In our own times we have seen no great exploits performed, except by those who have been accounted avaricious; all the others have failed. Julius II. attained the pontifical chair by means of his bounty; but he judged rightly in supposing that in order to enable him to prosecute the war against France it would do him injury to preserve his reputation for liberality. By his parsimony he was able to support the expense of all his wars without the imposition of new taxes. The present king of Spain could never have accomplished all his

great enterprises if he had felt any ambition to be thought liberal.

A prince, then, who would avoid poverty and always be in a condition to defend his dominions without imposing new taxes on his subjects, should care little for being charged with avarice, since the imputed vice may be the very means of securing the prosperity and stability of his government.

It may, however, be alleged that Cæsar would never have attained the empire but by his liberality, and that many others have arrived at the highest honours by the same means. I answer, you are either in possession of dominion already, or you are not. In the first place, liberality would be prejudicial; in the second, the reputation of it is serviceable and necessary. Cæsar endeavoured to appear liberal whilst he aspired to the empire of Rome. But if he had lived longer he would have lost that reputation for liberality which had paved him the way to empire, or he would have lost himself in the attempt to preserve it.

There have been, however, some princes who have performed splendid actions and who have distinguished themselves by their liberality; but then their prodigality did not come from the public purse. Such were

Cyrus, Alexander, and Cæsar. A prince ought to be very sparing of his own and his subjects' property; but he should be equally lavish of that which he takes from the enemy, if he desires to be popular with his troops; for that will not diminish his reputation but rather add to it. He who is too liberal cannot long continue so; he will become poor and contemptible unless he grinds his subjects with new taxes—which cannot fail to render him odious to them. Now there is nothing a prince ought to dread so much as his subjects' hatred; unless, indeed, it be their contempt. And both these evils may be occasioned by over liberality. If he must choose between extremes, it is better to submit to the imputation of parsimony than to make a show of liberality; since the first, though it may not be productive of honour, never gives birth to hatred and contempt.

CHAPTER XVII

Of cruelty and clemency, and whether it is better to be loved than feared.

To proceed to other qualities which are requisite in those who govern. A prince ought unquestionably to be merciful, but should take care how he executes his clemency. Cesare Borgia was accounted cruel; but it was to that cruelty that he was indebted for the advantage of uniting Romagna to his other dominions and of establishing in that province peace and tranquillity, of which it had been so long deprived. And, everything well considered, it must be allowed that this prince showed greater clemency than the people of Florence, who, to avoid the reproach of cruelty, suffered Pistoia to be destroyed. When it is necessary for a prince to restrain his subjects within the bounds of duty, he should not regard the imputation of cruelty, because by making a few examples he will find that he really showed more humanity in the end

than he who, by too great indulgence, suffers disorders to arise which commonly terminate in rapine and murder. For such disorders disturb a whole community, whilst punishments inflicted by the prince affect only a few individuals.

This is particularly true with respect to a new prince, who can scarcely avoid the reproach of cruelty, every new government being replete with dangers. Thus Virgil makes Dido excuse her severity by the necessity to which she was reduced of maintaining the interests of a throne which she did not inherit from her ancestors :

> Res dura et regni novitas me talia cogunt
> Moliri, et late fines custode tueri.—*Æn.* lib. i.

A prince, however, should not be afraid of phantoms of his own raising ; neither should he lend too ready an ear to terrifying tales which may be told him, but should temper his mercy with prudence in such a manner that too much confidence may not put him off his guard, nor causeless jealousies make him insupportable. There is a medium between a foolish security and an unreasonable distrust.

It has been sometimes asked whether it is better to be loved than feared ; to which

I answer that one should wish to be both. But as that is a hard matter to accomplish, I think, if it is necessary to make a selection, that it is safer to be feared than be loved. For it may be truly affirmed of mankind in general that they are ungrateful, fickle, timid, dissembling and self-interested; so long as you can serve them they are entirely devoted to you; their wealth, their blood, their lives, and even their offspring are at your disposal, when you have no occasion for them; but in the day of need they turn their back upon you. The prince who relies on professions courts his own destruction, because the friends whom he acquires by means of money alone, and whose attachment does not spring from a regard for personal merit, are seldom proof against reverse of fortune, but abandon their benefactor when he most requires their services. Men are generally more inclined to submit to him who makes himself dreaded than to one who merely strives to be beloved; and the reason is obvious, for friendship of this kind, being a mere moral tie, a species of duty resulting from a benefit, cannot endure against the calculations of interest: whereas fear carries with it the dread of punishment, which never loses its influence.

A prince, however, ought to make himself feared in such a manner that if he cannot gain the love he may at least avoid the hatred of his subjects; and he may attain this object by respecting his subjects' property and the honour of their wives. If he finds it absolutely necessary to inflict the punishment of death, he should avow the reason for it, and above all things he should abstain from touching the property of the condemned party. For certain it is that men sooner forget the death of their relations than the loss of their patrimony. Besides, when he once begins to live by means of rapine, many occasions offer for seizing the wealth of his subjects; but there will be little or no necessity for shedding blood.

But when a prince is at the head of his army and has under his command a multitude of soldiers he should make little account of being esteemed cruel; such a character will be useful to him, by keeping his troops in obedience and preventing every species of faction.

Hannibal, among many other admirable talents, possessed in a high degree that of making himself feared by his troops; insomuch that having led a very large army, composed of all kinds of people, into a foreign

country, he never had occasion, either in prosperity or adversity, to punish the least disorder or the slightest want of discipline: and this can only be attributed to his extreme severity and such other qualities as caused him to be feared and respected by his soldiers, and without which his extraordinary talents and courage would have been unavailing.

There have been writers, notwithstanding, but, in my opinion, very injudicious ones, who, whilst they render every degree of justice to his talents and his splendid achievements, still condemn the principle on which he acted. But nothing can in this respect more fully justify him than the example of Scipio, one of the greatest generals mentioned in history. His extreme indulgence towards the troops he commanded in Spain occasioned disorders and at length a revolt, which drew on him from Fabius Maximus, in full senate, the reproach of having destroyed the Roman soldiery. This general having suffered the barbarous conduct of one of his lieutenants towards the Locrians to go unpunished, a senator, in his justification, observed that there were some men who knew better how to avoid doing ill themselves than to punish it in others. This excess of indulgence would in time have tarnished

the glory and reputation of Scipio, if he had been a prince; but as he lived under a republican government it was not only connived at but redounded to his glory.

I conclude, then, with regard to the question whether it is better to be loved then feared, that it depends on the inclinations of the subjects themselves whether they will love their prince or not; but the prince has it in his own power to make them fear him, and, if he is wise, he will rather rely on his own resources than on the caprice of others, remembering that he should at the same time so conduct himself as to avoid being hated.

CHAPTER XVIII

Whether princes ought to be faithful to their engagements.

It is unquestionably very praiseworthy in princes to be faithful to their engagements; but among those of the present day who have been distinguished for great exploits few indeed have been remarkable for this virtue or have scrupled to deceive others who may have relied on their good faith.

It should therefore be known that there are two ways of deciding any contest: the one by laws, the other by force. The first is peculiar to men, the second to beasts; but when laws are not sufficiently powerful, it is necessary to recur to force: a prince ought therefore to understand how to use both these descriptions of arms. This doctrine is admirably illustrated to us by the ancient poets in the allegorical history of the education of Achilles, and many other princes of antiquity, by the centaur Chiron, who, under the double form of man and

beast, taught those who were destined to govern that it was their duty to use by turns the arms adapted to both these natures, seeing that one without the other cannot be of any durable advantage. Now, as a prince must learn how to act the part of a beast sometimes, he should make the fox and the lion his patterns. The first can but feebly defend himself against the wolf and the latter readily falls into such snares as are laid for him. From the fox, therefore, a prince will learn dexterity in avoiding snares ; and from the lion, how to employ his strength to keep the wolves in awe. But they who entirely rely on the lion's strength will not always meet with success : in other words, a prudent prince cannot and ought not to keep his word, except when he can do it without injury to himself or when the circumstances under which he contracted the engagement still exist.

I should be cautious in inculcating such a precept if all men were good ; but as the generality of mankind are wicked and ever ready to break their words, a prince should not pique himself in keeping his more scrupulously, especially as it is always easy to justify a breach of faith on his part. I could give numerous proofs of this and show

numberless engagements and treaties which have been violated by the treachery of princes, and that those who enacted the part of the fox have always succeeded best in their affairs. It is necessary, however, to disguise the appearance of craft and thoroughly to understand the art of feigning and dissembling; for men are generally so simple and so weak that he who wishes to deceive easily finds dupes.

One example, taken from the history of our own times, will be sufficient. During his whole life Pope Alexander VI. played a game of deception; and notwithstanding his faithless conduct was extremely well known, his artifices always proved successful. Oaths and protestations cost him nothing; never did a prince so often break his word or pay less regard to his engagements. This was because he so well understood this chapter in the art of government.

It is not necessary, however, for a prince to possess all the good qualities I have enumerated, but it is indispensable that he should appear to have them. I will even venture to affirm that it is sometimes dangerous to use them, though it is always useful to seem to possess them. A prince should earnestly endeavour to gain the

reputation of kindness, clemency, piety, justice, and fidelity to his engagements. He ought to possess all these good qualities but still retain such power over himself as to display their opposites whenever it may be expedient. I maintain that a prince, and especially a new prince, cannot with impunity exercise all the virtues, because his own self-preservation will often compel him to violate the laws of charity, religion, and humanity. He should habituate himself to bend easily to the various circumstances which may from time to time surround him. In a word, it will be as useful to him to persevere in the path of rectitude, while he feels no inconvenience in doing so, as to know how to deviate from it when circumstances dictate such a course. He should make it a rule above all things never to utter anything which does not breathe of kindness, justice, good faith, and piety: this last quality it is most important for him to appear to possess, as men in general judge more from appearances than from reality. All men have eyes, but few have the gift of penetration. Every one sees your exterior, but few can discern what you have in your heart; and those few dare not oppose the voice of the multitude, who have

the majesty of their prince on their side. Now, in forming a judgment of the minds of men, and more especially of princes, as we cannot recur to any tribunal we must attend only to results. Let it then be the prince's chief care to maintain his authority; the means he employs, be what they may, will, for this purpose, always appear honourable and meet with applause; for the vulgar are ever caught by appearances and judge only by the event. And as the world is chiefly composed of such as are called the vulgar, the voice of the few is seldom or never heard or regarded.

There is a prince now alive (whose name it may not be proper to mention) who ever preaches the doctrines of peace and good faith; but if he had observed either the one or the other, he would long ago have lost both his reputation and dominions.[1]

[1] Ferdinand V., king of Arragon and Castile, who by such means acquired the kingdoms of Naples and Navarre.

CHAPTER XIX

That it is necessary to avoid being hated and despised.

HAVING distinctly considered the principal qualities with which a prince should be endowed, I shall briefly discuss the rest in a general discourse under the following heads, *viz.*, that a prince ought sedulously to avoid everything which may make him odious or despicable. If he succeed in this he may fill his part with reasonable success, and need not fear danger from the infamy of other vices.

Nothing, in my opinion, renders a prince so odious as the violation of the right of property and a disregard to the honour of married woman. Subjects will live contentedly enough under a prince who neither invades their property nor their honour; and then he will only have to contend against the pretensions of a few ambitious persons whom he can easily find means to restrain.

A prince whose conduct is light, inconsistent, pusillanimous, irresolute, and effeminate

is sure to be despised: these defects he ought to shun as he would so many rocks, and endeavour to display a character for courage, gravity, energy, and magnificence in all his actions. His decisions in matters between individuals should be irrevocable, so that none may dare to think of abusing or deceiving him. By these means he will conciliate the esteem of his subjects and prevent any attempts to subvert his authority. He will then have less to apprehend from external enemies, who will be cautious in their attacks upon a prince who has secured the affection of his subjects.

A prince has two things to guard against: the machinations of his own subjects and the attempts of powerful foreigners. The latter he will be able to repel by means of good friends and good troops; and these he will be sure to have so long as his arms are respectable. Besides, internal peace can only be interrupted by conspiracies, which are only dangerous when they are encouraged and supported by foreign powers. The latter, however, dare not stir if the prince but conform to the rules I have laid down and follow the example of Nabis, the tyrant of Sparta.

With regard to his subjects, if all be at

peace outside his dominions a prince has nothing to dread but secret conspiracies, from which he may always secure himself by avoiding whatever can render him odious or contemptible. Conspiracies are seldom formed except against princes whose ruin and death would be acceptable to the people, otherwise men would not expose themselves to the dangers inseparable from such machinations.

History is filled with conspiracies; but how few have been crowned with success? No one can carry on such a design alone, nor trust any accomplices but malcontents. These frequently denounce their confederates and frustrate their designs in the hope of obtaining a large remuneration from him against whom they are leagued; so that those with whom you are necessarily associated in a conspiracy are placed between the temptation of a considerable reward and the dread of a great danger; so that to keep the secret it must either be entrusted to a very extraordinary friend or an irreconcileable enemy of the prince.

In short, conspirators live in continual fear, jealousy, and suspicion, whilst the prince is supported by all the splendour and majesty of the government, the laws, customs, and the assistance of his friends,

not to mention the affection which subjects naturally entertain towards those who govern them. So that conspirators have reason to fear both before and after the execution of their designs; for when the people have been once exasperated there is no resource left to which they may fly. Of this I might give many examples, but I shall content myself with one only which occurred in the last century.

Annibale Bentivogli, the grandfather of the reigning prince of Bologna, had been murdered by the Canneschi, and the only member of the family who survived was Giovanni Bentivogli, then an infant in the cradle. The people rose against the conspirators and massacred the whole family of the murderers; and in order still more strongly to show their attachment to the house of Bentivogli, as there was none of the family left who was capable of governing the state, the Bolognese, having received information that a natural son of that prince then lived at Florence, sent deputies thither to demand him, though he lived in that city under the name of an artisan who passed for his father, and to him they confided the direction of the state till Giovanni Bentivogli should be of age to govern.

A prince has therefore little to fear from conspiracies when he possesses the affections of the people; but he has no resource left if this support should fail him. Content the people and manage the nobles, and you have the maxim of wise governors.

France holds the first rank amongst well governed states. One of the wisest institutions they possess is unquestionably that of their parliaments, whose object is to watch over the security of the government and the liberties of the people. The founders of this institution were aware, on the one hand, of the insolence and ambition of the nobles, and, on the other, of the excess to which the people are liable to be transported against them; and they endeavoured to restrain both without the intervention of the king, who never could have taken part with the people, as he must thereby render the nobles discontented, nor could he favour the latter, without exciting the hatred of the people. Upon this account they have instituted an authority which, without the interference of the king, may favour the people and repress the insolence of the nobles. It must be confessed that nothing is more likely to give consistency to the government and ensure the tranquillity of the people.

And we may learn from hence that princes should reserve to themselves the distribution of favours and employments, and leave to the magistrates the care of pronouncing punishments, and, indeed, the general disposal of all things likely to excite discontent.

I repeat that a prince ought to cherish and support the nobility, but without attracting the hatred of the people. It may perhaps be objected that several Roman emperors were deposed and murdered by conspirators, though their conduct was replete with wisdom, talents and courage. In answer to this objection let us examine the character of some of these emperors, such as Marcus Aurelius the philosopher, Commodus his son, Pertinax, Julian, Severus, Antoninus 'Caracalla' his son, Macrinus, Heliogabalus, Alexander, and Maximinus. This examination will naturally lead me to unfold the causes of their downfall and to justify what I have before said in this chapter respecting the conduct that princes ought to adopt.

I must first observe that the Roman emperors had not only to restrain the ambition of the nobles and the insolence of the people but they had also to contend with

the cruelty and avarice of the soldiery, which was the ruin of several of those princes, it being almost impossible to please the soldiery without discontenting the people, who wished for peace as much as the former panted for war. The people sighed for a pacific prince and the soldiers for one who delighted in war, ambitious, cruel, and insolent (not of course to themselves but to the people), as from such a one they might hope for double pay and an opportunity of satiating their avarice and cruelty at the expense of their fellow subjects. From hence it happened that those emperors whose nature was averse from harsh measures were unable to retain either soldiery or people in subjection, and their own inevitable ruin was the result. Most of them, indeed, particularly those who were advanced to the throne from a private condition, despairing to reconcile interests totally opposite, determined to take part with the troops, and troubled themselves but little about the discontents of the people ; and this conduct was the safest, for in the alternative of exciting the hatred of the greater or lesser number, it is better to take part with the strongest side. Those emperors, therefore, who raised themselves to empire and stood

in need of extraordinary support to maintain their power chose rather to adhere to the soldiery than the people, which turned to their profit a disadvantage according to the degree of reputation they had with the military.

Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher, Pertinax and Alexander, princes as remarkable for their clemency as their love of justice and the simplicity of their manners, all came to unfortunate ends, except the first, and he indeed lived and died in peace and honour because he succeeded to the empire by hereditary right and was under no obligation either to the troops or to the people; and this circumstance, joined to his own excellent qualities, rendered him dear to all and enabled him to restrain the soldiery within the bounds of duty. But Pertinax being desirous to subject the military (against whose inclination, moreover, he had been elected emperor) to a very different and more severe discipline than had been observed by his predecessor Commodus, a few months after his elevation, fell a victim to their hatred, increased, perhaps, by the contempt which his great age inspired. We may here remark that hatred is as easily incurred by good actions as by evil; and hence, as I

have said before, a prince is often compelled to be wicked in order to maintain his power. For when the strongest party is corrupt (whether it be the people, the nobles, or the troops) he must comply with their disposition and content them, and from that moment he must renounce doing good, or it will prove his ruin.

As to Alexander, his clemency has been much praised by historians, but he was nevertheless an object of contempt on account of his effeminacy and because he suffered himself to be governed by his mother. The army conspired against this prince who was so good and so humane that in the course of a reign of fourteen years not one person was put to death without a trial. He was, however, sacrificed by his soldiers. On the other hand Commodus, Severus, Caracalla and Maximinus, having indulged themselves in all kinds of excesses to satisfy the avarice and cruelty of the troops, experienced no happier fate—with the exception of Severus, who reigned peaceably, though in order to satisfy the cupidity of the troops he oppressed the people ; but he had excellent qualities, which gained him at once the affection of the soldiers and the admiration of his subjects.

Now, as he raised himself to empire from a private station, and may for that reason serve as a model for those who may hereafter be in the same situation, I think it necessary to show briefly in what manner he assumed by turns the qualities of the fox and the lion, the two animals which, as I have said before, ought to serve as a model to princes.

Severus, knowing the cowardice of the emperor Julian, persuaded the army under his command in Illyria to march to Rome, in order to avenge the death of Pertinax, who had been massacred by the pretorian guard. Under this pretence, and without any suspicion that he aimed at empire, this general arrived in Italy before any one had intelligence of his departure from Illyria. He entered Rome, and the intimidated senate named him emperor and put Julian to death. But he had still two obstacles to surmount before he became master of the whole empire. Pescennius Niger and Albinus, one of whom commanded in Asia and the other in the western part of the empire, were both his competitors. The first of these had even been proclaimed emperor by his own legions. Severus, perceiving that he could not without danger

attack them both at the same time, determined to march against Niger and to deceive Albinus by a proposal to share the government with him ; and this offer was accepted by Albinus without hesitation. But he had no sooner vanquished and put Pescennius Niger to death and pacified the eastern district than, returning to Rome, he complained bitterly of Albinus's ingratitude, whom he did not hesitate to accuse of an attempt upon his life ; upon which account he said he was obliged to pass the Alps in order to punish him for his ingratitude. Severus arrived in Gaul, and Albinus lost at once the empire and his life.

If we examine the conduct of this emperor attentively, we shall find him as fierce as a lion and as cunning as a fox ; feared and respected by his troops as well as by the people ; but it will not seem strange that a private individual should maintain so difficult a post if we recollect that it was by commanding esteem and admiration that he disarmed the hatred which his rapacity would otherwise have excited.

Antoninus Caracalla (his son) possessed also many excellent qualities which made him dear to the legions and respected by the people ; he was a warrior and an

indefatigable enemy of effeminacy and high living, which rendered him the idol of the army; but then he carried his ferocity to such a pitch that not only the people but the soldiery and even his own officers, bore him an irreconcilable hatred. He perished by the hand of a centurion; a feeble vengeance for all the blood he had caused to be shed in Rome and Alexandria, where none of the inhabitants escaped carnage.

From hence we may observe that it is difficult for princes to escape such attempts at assassination as proceed from an obstinate and determined resolution. Their lives are at the mercy of everyone who despises death; but as these attempts are but rare, princes should not be very uneasy about them. They should, however, avoid giving any grievous offence to those who are constantly about their persons. This was peculiarly the error of Antoninus, who retained among his body-guard a centurion whose brother he had put to an ignominious death, and whom he was continually terrifying with menaces, an imprudence which cost him his life.

As to Commodus, he might easily have maintained his power had he but trod in the steps of his father, to whom alone he was

indebted for the empire; but as he was cruel, brutal and avaricious, the discipline which prevailed in the army soon gave way to the most unbridled licentiousness; he had also rendered himself contemptible to the army by his total disregard of his own dignity, of which he thought so little that he was not ashamed to descend into the arena and there combat with the common gladiators: he fell a sacrifice to a conspiracy provoked by the hatred and contempt which he had excited by his meanness, his avarice, and his ferocity. It now only remains to consider the character of Maximinus.

The legions having rid themselves of Alexander, whom they deemed too effeminate, made choice of Maximinus, a great warrior; but he becoming odious and contemptible, soon lost both his life and the empire. The meanness of his birth (he was known to have been a Thracian shepherd), his great delay in appearing at Rome to take possession of the empire, but, above all, the cruelties of his lieutenants, both in the capital and in the rest of the empire, rendered him so vile and odious that Africa, in the first place, and afterwards the whole senate and people of Rome, and all Italy, conspired against him and were supported by his own army

who, disgusted with his cruelties and fatigued with the length of the siege of Aquileia, put him to death with the less apprehension as they saw how universally he was detested.

I shall say nothing of Heliogabalus, Macrinus, or Julian, who all died covered with ignominy. But I shall add in conclusion that princes of the present day are under no necessity of gratifying the soldiery in their governments, because they do not form, as at Rome, an independent body, nor do they continue for years in the same governments and provinces, and are not therefore to be dreaded, provided they are treated with a suitable degree of respect. At Rome the chief policy of the emperors was to content the soldiery; but in our modern states the people are the class whose affection it is most important to obtain, as being the strongest and most powerful. I except Turkey and Egypt. We know that the Grand Signior is obliged to keep on foot an army of twelve thousand infantry and fifteen thousand cavalry, which constitute the strength and security of his government, and it is consequently of the highest importance to him to conciliate their affections. It is the same with respect to the soldan of Egypt, whose troops have, as we may say,

the power in their own hands, and he is consequently obliged to treat them with great respect and to humour them moreover at the expense of the people, from whom he has nothing to apprehend. This government resembles no other, unless perhaps the Roman pontificate. It cannot properly be called either hereditary or new, since at the soldan's death his children do not succeed, but a successor is chosen by particular persons vested with the power of election ; nor is it subject to those inconveniences which are incident to a new state, because although the person of the prince is new, yet the government has been long established, and so he is received as if he enjoyed an hereditary right.

To return, however, to my subject : upon careful examination it will be seen that these Roman emperors, whose unfortunate fates I have enumerated, have chiefly perished by having made themselves odious and contemptible. That is the reason why several of them, whether their characters were good or bad, experienced a fate so different from those in whose steps they endeavoured to tread. It was thus that Alexander and Pertinax, who had elevated themselves, were destroyed by attempting

to tread in the steps of Marcus, who came to the empire by hereditary right and who therefore owed no obligation either to the people or the legions. Caracalla, Commodus, and Maximinus were severally sacrificed by an attempt to imitate the conduct of Severus, to whom they were far from equal in talent.

A new prince should therefore conduct himself differently from Marcus and Severus; but he may learn from the first how to elevate himself and from the second by what means he may maintain himself in that elevation.

CHAPTER XX

Whether fortresses and some other things are really of service to a prince.

In order to maintain themselves effectually in possession of their dominions some princes disarm their subjects. Others encourage divisions in the provinces subjugated to their rule. Some go so far as designedly to make themselves inimical to the people, while others strenuously endeavour to gain over those whom they had suspected at the commencement of their reign. One prince builds fortresses, and another razes them to the ground. It is not easy to determine what line of conduct is the best to adopt without a thorough knowledge of the different states where the rules are to be applied. It will be sufficient therefore to treat this part of the subject in a general way.

A new prince never disarms his subjects; on the contrary, if he find them without the means of defence he at once provides them with arms, and his subjects are thus

converted into soldiers entirely devoted to his service. The suspected become thenceforth attached to his cause, his friends continue firm in their attachment, and all his people become his partisans.

It is, without doubt, impossible to arm every one; but if the prince is kind and obliging to those whom he does arm, he can have little to fear from the rest. Those who are in his service will think themselves honoured by the preference, and those who are not will readily excuse him, from a conviction that the greatest merit is due to those who run the greatest dangers. But a prince who disarms his subjects forfeits their affection by the distrust which he betrays, and nothing is more likely to excite their hatred. In addition it becomes necessary under such circumstances to support an army of mercenaries, the dangers of which I have before sufficiently explained. Besides, amongst other inconveniences troops of this kind can never be efficient against a powerful enemy and disaffected subjects.

Thus it has always been a maxim with those who raise themselves to power to arm their subjects. But when a prince acquires a new state and annexes it as an appendage to his hereditary dominions he should then

disarm his subjects, excepting those who were favourable to his views antecedent to his new conquest; and even then it would still behove him to soften and enervate as occasion may require, in order that his whole military force may consist of his own subjects.

Some of our ancestors, who were deemed wise men, used to say that Pistoia should be restrained by domestic factions and Pisa by fortresses. Upon which account they always fomented divisions and discord in the cities and towns where the people were suspected. This policy was well devised, considering the uncertain state of affairs in Italy at that time. But it would scarcely be adopted now, because a town divided against itself could never successfully withstand an enemy, for the latter would infallibly allure one of the two factions to its cause, and so become master of the place.

The Venetians, adopting this very policy, favoured alternately the Guelphs and the Ghibellines in the cities subjected to their sway; and although they never suffered them to come to actual collision together, yet they incessantly fomented divisions, which prevented them from thinking of revolt; but Venice did not derive from such conduct the benefit which was anticipated;

for her armies having been defeated at Vaila, one of these factions had the audacity to aspire to sovereign power, and was successful in the attempt.

These expedients argue weakness in a prince; for no government of any power will ever permit such divisions, although in times of peace they are unquestionably attended with less inconvenience, because they divert the attention of the people from rebellion; yet in time of war they betray the impotence of a state which must employ so weak a policy.

It is by conquering difficulties that princes raise themselves to power, and fortune cannot more successfully elevate a new prince than by raising enemies and confederacies against him, thus stimulating his genius, exercising his courage, and affording him an opportunity of climbing to the highest degree of power. Many persons are therefore of opinion that it is advantageous for a prince to have enemies, which by preventing him from indulging in a dangerous repose will enable him to win the esteem and admiration not only of his faithful but of his rebellious subjects.

Princes, and particularly new ones, have often experienced more zeal and fidelity

from those subjects whom they suspected at the beginning of their reign than from others in whom they placed more confidence at first. Pandolpho Petrucci, prince of Sienna, governed chiefly by the assistance of those whom he once suspected. It is, however, difficult to establish general rules upon a subject that must vary according to circumstances. I shall only observe that if those who are disaffected to the prince at the beginning of his reign stand in actual need of his protection he may easily gain their support; and afterwards they will continue faithful to him from a desire to efface by their services every unfavourable prejudice to which their former conduct may have given birth. Those, on the other hand, who have never opposed the prince's interest will serve him with that lukewarm zeal which is the invariable result of complete security.

But since the nature of my subject seems to require it, I cannot refrain from advising a prince who may have attained supreme authority by means of popular favour to examine minutely the cause and motives of this good will: if it arise more from a hatred of the old government than from any interest inspired by the prince himself, he may,

perhaps, find it no easy matter to preserve the people's affection, as it will be almost impossible ever to satisfy their wishes.

If we examine history, ancient or modern, we shall find it easier for a prince to gain the friendship of those who lived quietly under the preceding government, and were consequently averse to his accession, than to make others his friends who sided with him at first and favoured his enterprise merely from discontent.

Princes have sometimes erected fortresses for the purpose of more easily defending their states from the attacks of internal enemies and in order to be able effectually to repel the first efforts at a revolt. This mode is an old and, in my opinion, a very good plan. Nevertheless even in our own times Niccolo Vitelli actually demolished the two fortresses of the city of Castello in order to effect the safety of that state ; and Guido Ubaldo, duke of Urbino, having recovered his duchy from which he had been driven by Cesare Borgia, razed all the fortresses in order the more easily to maintain his conquest. The Bentivoglii acted in a similar manner at Bologna, when that state was restored to their dominion.

Fortresses are therefore useful or dangerous

according to circumstances ; and if in some cases they are serviceable, they are in others injurious. Thus a prince who is more in dread of his subjects than of foreign foes ought to fortify his cities ; but if the reverse, he should abstain from such a course. The citadel which Francisco Sforza built at Milan has caused a more irreparable injury to his family than all the disturbances and disorders to which that duchy has ever been exposed.

There is no better fortress for a prince than the affection of the people. If he is hated by his subjects all other fortresses will be in vain ; for when they fly to arms there will be no want of enemies outside the walls to afford them assistance. Fortresses have been of little use to the princes of the present day, with the exception perhaps of the Countess of Forli,[1] who, after the death of her husband Count Girolamo, found herself enabled by such assistance to wait for succours from the state of Milan, whereby her authority was restored ; yet even then she was greatly indebted to circumstances which prevented her subjects from obtaining the assistance of foreign aid. When she was afterwards attacked by Cesare Borgia she

[1] Caterina Sforza, daughter of Galeazzo Sforza.

doubtless became convinced, though perhaps too late, that the best fortress for a prince is found in the people's affection.

After due reflection therefore I see no reason for blaming a prince either for building fortresses or abstaining from such a course; but without doubt he is deserving of the most decisive censure who is content to rely on their protection alone, regardless of the hatred of his subjects.

CHAPTER XXI

By what means a prince may become esteemed.

NOTHING is more likely to make a prince esteemed than great enterprises and extraordinary actions. Ferdinand, the present king of Spain, may be considered as a new prince because he has advanced himself from a petty state to be the most renowned monarch in Christendom. Now, if we examine his actions we find that they all deserve to be accounted great, and some of them indeed are extraordinary.

Scarcely was this prince seated on the throne when he turned his arms against the kingdom of Grenada ; and this war laid the foundation of his greatness. For the nobles of Castile were so intent on the invasion that they paid no attention to his political innovations, and so he met with no impediment. But all the time he was imperceptibly establishing a dominion over them, by maintaining armies at the expense of the church and people, and by disciplining them

in such a manner as afterwards made his power irresistible. Afterwards, in order that he might undertake enterprises still more brilliant, he dexterously assumed the mask of religion and by a cruel piety drove the Moors out of his dominions. The means he took for this enterprise were without doubt barbarous ; yet the exploit was extraordinary and almost unexampled.

Under the same cloak of religion Ferdinand afterwards attacked Africa, Italy, and France, always having some great project on hand the event of which kept his subjects in continual suspense and admiration. And those enterprises succeeded each other so speedily that his subjects had no leisure to think of other matters, much less to engage in conspiracies against him.

It is also of great service to a prince to afford unusual examples of civil administration, similar to those which are related of Bernabo di Milano, who, whenever an opportunity occurred by anyone in civil life performing some extraordinary action, either good or bad, would adopt some method of rewarding or punishing him which would be much spoken about. A prince should also invest his actions with a character of greatness, and, above all things, avoid

weakness and indecision. He must be a firm friend or an open foe, otherwise he will conciliate his subjects with difficulty. Should two powerful neighbours go to war he must declare for one of them, or he will inevitably become the prey of the conqueror, and the vanquished party will be gratified at his ruin, and thus he will lose all protection; for the conqueror will despise a doubtful friend who may abandon him on the first reverse of fortune, and the vanquished will never pardon him for remaining a tranquil spectator of his defeat.

When Antiochus marched into Greece, on the invitation of the Etolians, to drive out the Romans, he sent ambassadors to the Achaians, friends of the latter, to secure their neutrality. The Romans on the other hand demanded their assistance. The affair being taken into deliberation in the council of the Achaians, the Roman envoy spoke after the ambassador of Antiochus, and said, "You are advised to remain neutral, as the safest mode of conduct; and I assure you there can be none so bad; for you will inevitably remain at the mercy of the conqueror whoever he may be, and will thus have two chances to one against you."

They can be no real friends who ask you

to stand neutral. This consideration alone ought to open the eyes of a prince to the consequences of such conduct. Irresolute princes frequently embrace a neutrality to avoid some present inconvenience; but they meet their ruin by such a course. A bold adhesion to one party secures friendship by the tie of gratitude and leaves but little to fear from the mercy of the conqueror; first, because men are seldom so wholly destitute of honour as to repay benefits by so revolting ingratitude: secondly, because victory is rarely so very complete as to place the conqueror in a state to violate all the laws of propriety. If on the other hand he whose fortune the prince espouses should be vanquished, he may in time retrieve his losses and acknowledge this mark of preference and esteem.

A prince ought never, as I have already observed, unless under the pressure of circumstances, to espouse the part of a neighbouring state more powerful than himself, because he lies at the mercy of his neighbours, should he be the conqueror. Thus the Venetians were ruined by unnecessarily allying themselves with France against the duke of Milan. The Florentines, on the other hand, could not be blamed for embracing the cause

of the pope and the king of Spain when they marched their forces against Lombardy; because by adopting this step they yielded to the dictates of necessity. After all, no party can be absolutely sure of success, and sometimes one danger is avoided only to encounter a greater; the utmost human prudence can do in such extremities is to choose the lesser evil.

Princes ought to honour talents and protect the arts, particularly commerce and agriculture. It is peculiarly important that those who follow such pursuits should be secure from all dread of being overcharged with taxes and despoiled of their lands after they have improved them by superior cultivation. Finally, they should not neglect to entertain the people at certain periods of the year with festivals and shows, and they should honour with their presence the different guilds and corporations, and display on such occasions the greatest affability and facility of access, always remembering to support their station with becoming dignity, which should never be lost sight of under any circumstances.

CHAPTER XXII

Of ministers.

A PROPER choice of ministers is of no small importance to a prince, for the first opinion that is proved of his capacity arises from the persons by whom he is surrounded. When they are men of ability he is deemed a wise prince for having discovered their worth and found means to attach them to him. But when they prove otherwise, a mean opinion is entertained of his judgment from the unfit selection he has made. All those who knew Antonio da Venafro rendered justice to the judgment and wisdom of Pandolpho Petrucci, who chose so able a man for the administration of his affairs.

In the capacities of mankind there are three degrees: one man understands things by means of his own natural endowments; another understands things when they are explained to him; and a third can neither understand them of himself nor when they are explained by others. The first are rare

and excellent, the second have their merit, but the last are wholly worthless.

Pandolpho belonged at least to the second class; for when a prince can distinguish what is useful from what is injurious he may, without being a man of genius, judge of the conduct of his ministers and praise or blame it with such discretion that they, from a conviction they cannot deceive, serve him with zeal and fidelity.

But how are princes to know their ministers? There is one infallible rule, *viz.* to observe whether he attends more to his own interest than to that of the state. A minister should be entirely devoted to the public service and should never address the prince on his private affairs. It is the part of the prince to attend to the interests of the minister and to heap honours, riches, fortune and other favours upon him, that so he may be satisfied in his station and have no reason to desire a change; in fine, that he may dread, and endeavour with all his power to prevent, any fatal reverse which may threaten his master. And this is the only method of establishing between a prince and his ministers a confidence equally useful and honourable to both.

CHAPTER XXIII

How a prince ought to avoid flatterers.

I MUST not forget to mention one evil against which princes should ever be upon their guard and which they cannot avoid except by the greatest prudence, and this evil is the flattery which reigns in every court. Men have so much self-love and so good an opinion of themselves that it is very difficult to steer clear of such contagion; and besides, in endeavouring to avoid it they run the risk of being despised. For princes have no other way of expelling flatterers than by showing that the truth will not offend. Yet if everyone had the privilege of uttering his sentiments with impunity, what would become of the respect due to the majesty of the sovereign?

A prudent prince should take a middle course and make choice of some discreet men in his state to whom alone he may give the liberty of telling him the truth on such subjects as he shall inquire information

from them. He ought undoubtedly to interrogate them and hear their opinions upon every subject of importance, and determine afterwards according to his own judgment, conducting himself at all times in such a manner as to convince everyone that the more freely they speak the more acceptable they will be. After which he should listen to nobody else, but proceed firmly and steadily in the execution of what he has determined.

A prince who acts otherwise is either bewildered by the adulation of flatterers or loses all respect and consideration by the uncertain and wavering conduct he is obliged to pursue. This doctrine can be supported by an instance from the history of our own times. Father Luke said of the Emperor Maximilian, his master, now on the throne, that "he never took counsel of any person, and notwithstanding he never acted from an opinion of his own," and in this he adopted a method diametrically opposite to that which I have advocated. For as this prince never entrusted his designs to any of his ministers their suggestions were not made till the very moment when they should be executed; so that, pressed by the exigencies of the moment, and overwhelmed with

obstacles and unforeseen difficulties, he was obliged to yield to whatever opinions his ministers might offer. Hence it happens that what he does one day he is obliged to cancel the next; and thus nobody can depend on his decisions, for it is impossible to know what will be his ultimate determination.

A prince ought to take the opinions of others in everything, but only at such times as it pleases himself and not whenever they are obtruded upon him, so that no one shall presume to give him advice when he does not request it. He ought to be inquisitive and listen with attention; and when he perceives any one hesitate to tell him the full truth, he ought to evince the utmost displeasure at such conduct.

Those are much mistaken who imagine that a prince who listens to the counsel of others will be but little esteemed and thought incapable of acting on his own judgment. It is an infallible rule that a prince who does not possess an intelligent mind of his own can never be well advised unless he is entirely governed by the advice of an able minister, on whom he may repose the whole cares of government; but in this case he runs a great risk of being stripped of his

authority by the very person to whom he has so indiscreetly confided his power. And if instead of one counsellor he has several, how can he, ignorant and uninformed as he is, conciliate the various and opposite opinions of those ministers, who are probably more intent on their own interests than those of the state, and that without his suspecting it?

Besides, men being naturally wicked incline to good only when they are compelled to it; from whence we may conclude that good counsel, come from what quarter it may, is owing entirely to the wisdom of the prince, and the wisdom of the prince does not arise from the goodness of the counsel.

CHAPTER XXIV

The reason why the princes of Italy have lost their states.

A PRINCE, even of new creation, may maintain himself as easily in his states as one who reigns by hereditary right if he but follow the maxims I have laid down; and his situation will be, perhaps, in some respects preferable; for we are apt to pay more attention to the conduct of a new prince, and therefore if he govern with wisdom his merit will conciliate the esteem and affection of his subjects more than any legitimate right of dominion. It is, besides, well known that men think much more of the present than the past, and never seek for change so long as they find themselves comfortable. A prince who performs his duties well need never fear the want of defenders; his recent elevation, so far from being a motive for esteeming him in a less degree will on the contrary double his glory, on account of the obstacles he has had to conquer and

which his merit alone has enabled him to surmount. So that he will acquire the renown not only of having founded a new principality but of having established wise laws, a good army, firm alliances and virtuous examples; whereas he who was born a prince and loses his dominions by imprudent conduct deserves eternal infamy.

If we examine the conduct of the king of Naples, the duke of Milan, and others who have lost their dominions in our own time, we shall find that they have all committed a grand fault in neglecting to institute a national militia. Nay more, they appear to have given themselves no trouble to gain the affections of the people and the friendship of the nobles; for a prince who avoids such errors and is strong enough to bring an army into the field can never well be stripped of his dominions. Philip of Macedon, I do not mean the father of Alexander the Great but the monarch who was defeated by Titus Quintius, possessed only a petty state when compared with the territories of either Rome or Greece, whose combined efforts he had to withstand; yet he resisted those great powers, and during the several years that the war lasted he lost only a few towns; but he was a warrior and knew the art of

gaining the affections of his people and the esteem of the great.

It is not, therefore, owing to the malevolence of fortune that the princes of Italy have lost possession of their dominions but to their own cowardice and want of foresight. For they were so far from believing such a revolution in their fortunes possible (which is commonly the case with governments whose tranquillity has not been disturbed for some time), that when they saw the enemy approach, they fled instead of defending themselves, vainly fancying that the people would feel impatient under the insolence of a conqueror and instantly recall them. A course, indeed, which must be taken when all other resources fail; but surely he is much to be condemned who neglects all other remedies and confides in that alone, and flies ignobly, in the hope that he may be recalled to the dominions he has shamefully deserted; a hope ridiculous and vain, but even were it well founded he who counts on foreign aid is sure to find a master in his defender. It is in himself and in his own courage alone that a prince should seek refuge against the reverses of fortune.

CHAPTER XXV

How far fortune influences the things of this world, and how far she may be resisted.

I KNOW that several have thought, and many still are of opinion, that all sublunary events are governed either by Divine Providence or by chance, in such a manner that human wisdom has no share in their direction ; and hence they infer that man should abstain from interfering with their course and leave everything to its natural tendency.

The revolutions which in our times are of such frequent recurrence seem to support this doctrine, and I own that I myself am almost inclined to favour such opinions, particularly when I consider how far those events surpass all human conjecture ; yet as we confessedly possess a free will, it must, I think, be allowed that chance does not so far govern the world as to leave no province for the exercise of human prudence.

For my own part I cannot help comparing the blind power of chance to a rapid river,

which, having overflowed its banks, inundates the plain, uproots trees, carries away houses and lands, and sweeps all before it in its destructive progress; everybody flies, possessing neither resolution nor power to oppose its fury. But this should not discourage us when the river has returned within its natural limits from constructing dykes and banks to prevent a recurrence of similar disasters. It is the same with fortune; she exercises her power when we oppose no barrier to her progress.

If we cast our eyes on Italy, which has been the theatre of these revolutions, and consider the causes by which they have been provoked, we shall find it to be a defenceless country. If she had been properly fortified like Germany, Spain, or France, such inundations of foreigners would never have happened, or at least their irruptions would have been attended with less devastation.

Let this suffice in general concerning the necessity of opposing fortune. But to descend to particulars. It is no uncommon thing to see a prince fall from prosperity to adversity without our being able to attribute his fate to any change in conduct or character; for, as I have already shown at large

he who relies solely on fortune must be ruined inevitably whenever she abandons him.

Those princes who adapt their conduct to circumstances are rarely unfortunate. Fortune is only changeable to those who cannot conform themselves to the varying exigencies of the times; for we see different men take different courses to obtain the end they have in view; for instance, in pursuit of riches or glory one prosecutes his object at random, the other with caution and prudence: one employs art, the other force; one is impetuosity itself, the other all patience; means by which each may severally succeed. It also happens that of two who follow the same route one may arrive at his destination and the other fail; and that if two other persons whose dispositions are diametrically opposite pursue the same object by wholly different means, yet both shall equally prosper; which is entirely owing to the temper of the times, which always prove favourable or adverse, according as men conform to them.

Circumstances also frequently decide whether a prince conducts himself well or ill on any particular occasion. There are times when an extraordinary degree of

prudence is necessary ; there are others when the prince should know how to trust some things to chance ; but there is nothing more difficult than suddenly to change his conduct and character ; sometimes from inability to resist his old habits and inclinations, at others from want of resolution to quit a course in which he had always been successful.

Julius II., who was of a fiery and violent disposition, succeeded in all his enterprises ; doubtless because a prince of such a character was best adapted to the circumstances under which the church was then governed by this pontiff. Witness his first invasion of the territory of Bologna in the life of Giovanni Bentivoglio, which gave great umbrage to the Venetians and the kings of France and Spain, but none of them dared to interfere. The first, because they did not feel themselves strong enough to cope with a pontiff of his character ; Spain, because she was engaged in the conquest of Naples ; and France, besides having an interest in keeping on good terms with Julius, wished still to humble the Venetians ; so that she, without hesitation, granted the pope all the assistance he required.

Julius II., therefore, by a precipitate

mode of proceeding, succeeded in an enterprise which could not have been accomplished by cool and deliberate measures. He would unquestionably have failed had he given Spain and the Venetians time to reflect on his designs, and if he had allowed France the opportunity of amusing him by excuses and delays.

Julius II. displayed in all his enterprises the same character of violence; and his successes have in that respect fully justified him; but he did not perhaps live long enough to experience the inconstancy of fortune; for had an occasion unexpectedly occurred in which it would have been necessary to act with prudence and circumspection, he would infallibly have been ruined, in consequence of that impetuosity and inflexibility of character which wholly governed him.

From all these circumstances we may conclude that those who cannot change their system when occasion requires it will no doubt continue prosperous as long as they glide with the stream of fortune; but when that turns against them they are ruined, from not being able to follow that blind goddess through all her variations. Besides, I think that it is better to be bold

than too circumspect; because fortune is of a sex that likes not a tardy wooer, and repulses all who are not ardent; she declares also more frequently in favour of those who are young, because they are bold and enterprising.

CHAPTER XXVI

An exhortation to deliver Italy from foreign powers.

When I take a review of the subject matter treated of in this book, and examine whether the circumstances in which we are now placed would be favourable to the establishment of a new government, honourable alike to its founder and advantageous to Italy, it appears to me that there never was, nor ever will be, a period more appropriate for the execution of so glorious an undertaking.

If it was necessary that the people of Israel should be slaves to Egypt in order to elicit the rare talents of Moses; that the Persians should groan under the oppression of the Medes in order to prove the courage and magnanimity of Cyrus; and that the Athenians should be scattered and dispersed in order to make manifest the rare virtues of Theseus, it will be likewise necessary for

the glory of some Italian hero that his country should be reduced to its present miserable condition, that they should be greater slaves than the Israelites, more oppressed than the Persians and still more dispersed than the Athenians; in a word, that they should be without laws and without chiefs, pillaged, torn to pieces, and enslaved by foreign powers.

And though it has sometimes unquestionably happened that men have arisen who appeared to be sent by Heaven to achieve our deliverance, yet jealous fortune has ever abandoned them in the midst of their career; so that our unfortunate country still groans and pines away in the expectation of a deliverer who may put an end to the devastations in Lombardy, Tuscany, and the kingdom of Naples. She supplicates Heaven to raise up a prince who may free her from the odious and humiliating yoke of foreigners, who may close the numberless wounds with which she has been so long afflicted, and under whose standards she may march against her cruel oppressors.

But on whom can Italy cast her eyes except upon your illustrious house which, visibly favoured by Heaven and the church,

the government of which is confided to its care, possesses also the wisdom and the power necessary to undertake so glorious an enterprise? And I cannot think that the execution of this project will seem difficult if you reflect on the actions and conduct of the heroes whose examples I have above adduced. Though their exploits were indeed wonderful they were still but men; and although their merit raised them above others yet none of them certainly were placed in a situation so favourable as that in which you now stand. You have justice on your side; their cause was not more lawful than yours, and the blessing of God will attend you no less than them. Every war that is necessary is just; and it is humanity to take up arms for the defence of a people to whom no other resource is left.

All circumstances concur to facilitate the execution of so noble a project, for the accomplishment of which it will only be necessary to tread in the steps of those great men whom I have had an opportunity of mentioning in the course of this work. For though some of them, it is true, were conducted by the hand of God in a wonderful manner, though the sea divided to let them

pass, a cloud directed their course, a rock streamed with water to assuage their thirst, and manna fell from heaven to appease their hunger, yet there is no occasion for such miracles at present, as you possess in yourself sufficient power to execute a plan you ought by no means to neglect. God will not do everything for us; much is left to ourselves and the free exercise of our will, that so our own actions may not be wholly destitute of merit.

If none of our princes has hitherto been able to effect what is now expected from your illustrious house, and if Italy has continually been unfortunate in her wars, the evil has arisen from the defects in military discipline, which no person has possessed the ability to reform.

Nothing reflects so much honour on a new prince as the new laws and institutions established under his direction, especially when they are good and bear the character of grandeur. Now it must be acknowledged that Italy soon accommodates herself to new forms. Her inhabitants are by no means deficient in courage, but they are destitute of proper chiefs; the proof of this is in the duels and other individual combats

in which the Italians have always evinced consummate ability, whilst their valour in battles has appeared well-nigh extinguished. This can only be attributed to the weakness of the officers, who are unable to ensure obedience from those who know, or think they know, the art of war. Thus we have the spectacle of the greatest generals of the present day giving orders which are never executed with exactness and celerity. These are the reasons why in the wars in which we have been for the last twenty years engaged the armies raised in Italy have been almost always beaten. Witness Il Taro, Alexandria, Capua, Genoa, Vaila, Bologna, and Mestri.

If therefore your illustrious house is willing to regulate its conduct by the example of our ancestors who have delivered their country from the rule of foreigners, it is necessary above all things, as the only true foundation of every enterprise, to set on foot a national army; you cannot have better or more faithful soldiers; and though every one of them may be a good man yet they will become still better when they are all united, and see themselves honoured, caressed, and rewarded by a prince of their own.

It is therefore absolutely necessary to have troops raised in our own country if we wish to protect it from the invasion of foreign powers. The Swiss as well as the Spanish infantry are highly esteemed, but both have defects which may be avoided in the formation of our troops, which would render them superior to both of those powers. The Spaniards cannot support the shock of cavalry, and the Swiss cannot maintain their ground against infantry that is as resolute as themselves.

Experience has fully shown that the Spanish battalions cannot resist the French cavalry and that the Swiss have been beaten by the infantry of Spain. And though there has not been any thorough trial with regard to the Swiss on this point, yet we had a taste of it at the battle of Ravenna, where the Spanish infantry came in contact with the German troops, who fought in the same order as the Swiss. Upon that occasion, the Swiss, having with their accustomed vivacity and under the protection of their bucklers thrown themselves across the pikes of the Germans, the latter were obliged to give way and would have been entirely defeated if their cavalry had not come to their relief.

It is necessary therefore to institute a military force possessing neither the defects of the Swiss or the Spanish infantry and able to maintain its ground against the French cavalry, and this is to be effected not by changing their arms but by altering their discipline. Nothing is more likely to make a new prince esteemed and to render his reign illustrious.

Such an opportunity ought eagerly to be embraced in order that Italy after her long sufferings may at last behold her deliverer appear. With what demonstrations of joy and gratitude, with what affection, with what impatience for revenge, would he not be received by those unfortunate provinces who have so long groaned under such odious oppression! What city would shut her gates against him, and what people would be so blind as to refuse him obedience? What rivals would he have to dread? Is there one Italian who would not hasten to pay him homage? All are weary of the tyranny of these barbarians. May your illustrious house, strong in all the hopes which justice gives our cause, deign to undertake this noble enterprise, that so, under your banners, our nation may resume its ancient splendour and, under your auspices,

behold the prophecy of Petrarch at last fulfilled.

When virtue takes the field,
Short will the conflict be,
Barbarian rage shall yield
The palm to Italy:
For patriot blood still warms Italian veins,
Though low the fire, a spark at least remains.[1]

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[1] Virtu contr'al furore
Prendera l'arme et fia il combatter corto
Che l'antico valore
Negl' Italici cuor non è ancor morto.